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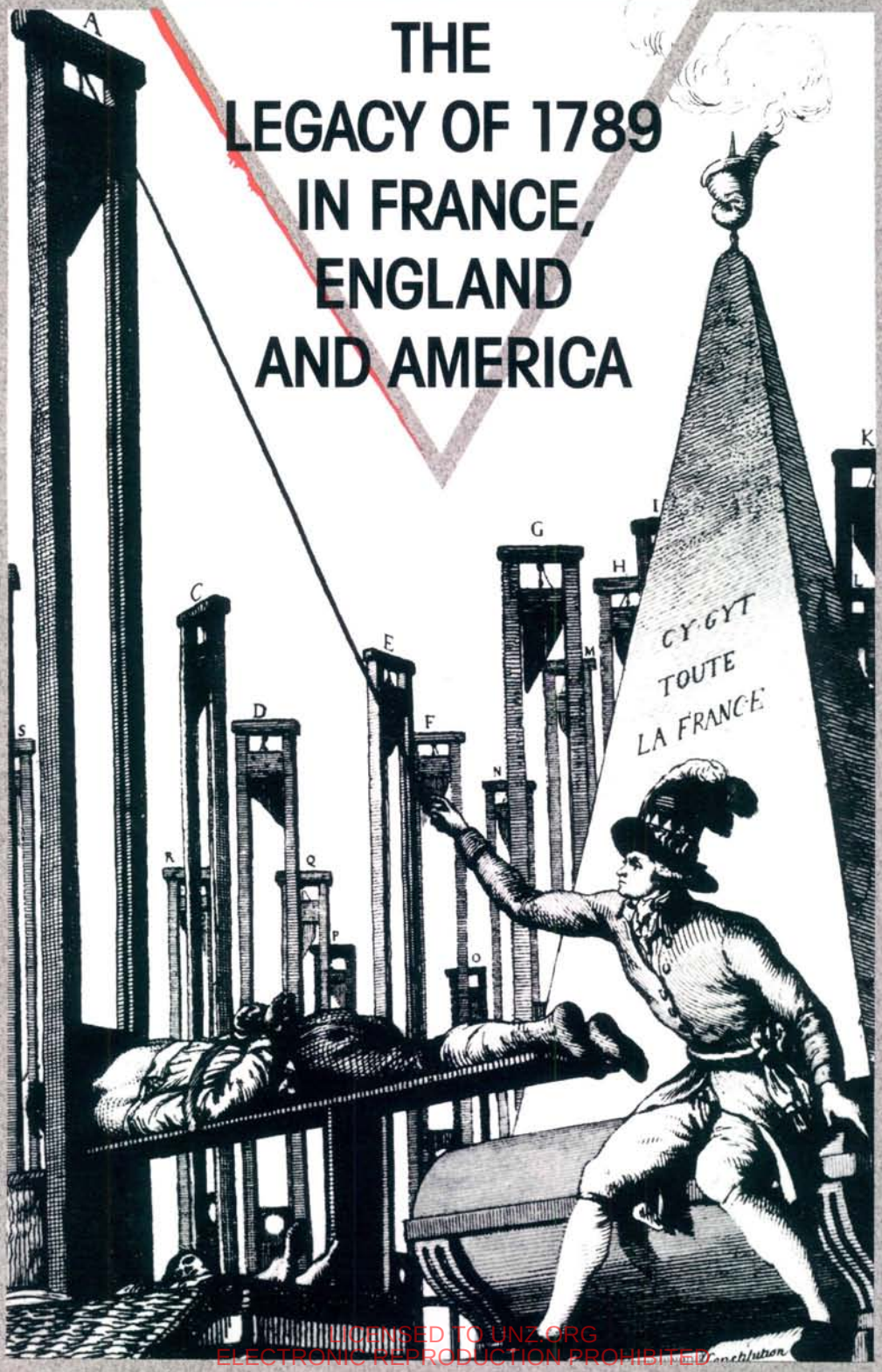
Chronicles

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

Revolution

THE LEGACY OF 1789 IN FRANCE, ENGLAND AND AMERICA



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Will Uncle Sam Be Our National Baby-Sitter?

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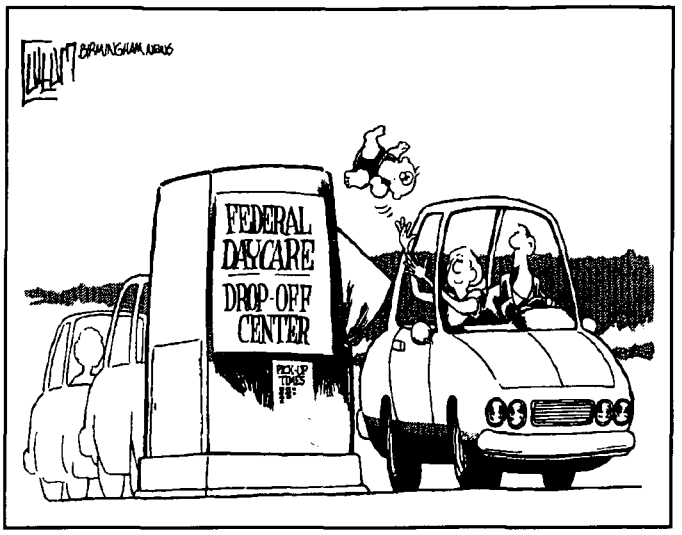

- *Are American families unfairly overtaxed?*
- *What are the twelve myths about families and daycare?*
- *How do we measure "quality" child care?*
- *Have we lost interest in the next generation?*
- *Does "one size fit all" when it comes to child care?*

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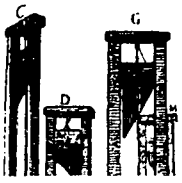
"It is essential to the triumph of reform that it shall never succeed."
—Hazlitt

PERSPECTIVE



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Cover of Robespierre who, having executed all of France, guillotines the executioner. From the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Inside illustrations by Daniel Sweetman, except where noted.

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Vol. 13, No. 6 June 1989

On 'Globalization'

In his Cultural Revolutions piece in the March issue, William Hawkins claims that the assertion the Smoot-Hawley Tariff caused the Great Depression has "no grounding in fact or logic." He attributes this assertion solely to a campaign speech made by Franklin D. Roosevelt. Mr. Hawkins is mistaken.

In his book *The Way the World Works*, Jude Wanniski presents an elaborate and detailed analysis of the relationship between the two. He shows that the ups and downs of the stock market tracked the ups and downs of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff as it progressed through Congress.

In his book *America's Great Depression*, Murray Rothbard covers the same ground. He devotes less space to Smoot-Hawley than does Wanniski, but discusses a number of other protectionist measures taken about the same time.

Mr. Hawkins may disagree with Wanniski, Rothbard, and the many other economists whose analyses of the Great Depression led them to the same conclusions. He may dispute both their facts and their logic. However, he simply cannot claim that there are neither facts nor logic to support the assertion that protectionism brought on the Great Depression.

Hawkins is quite correct is his assessment of the damage done by Harry Dexter White, and is largely correct in condemning "globalization." Nevertheless, the case against protectionism and for free trade is genuinely a "conservative" one. It goes straight back to Adam Smith, surely one of the greatest "conservatives" of all time.

—*Joseph P. Martino*
Sidney, OH

Mr. Hawkins Replies:

Jude Wanniski is a journalist, not an economist, and nothing better demonstrates the difference than his treatment of Smoot-Hawley. Wanniski's polemic is far too shallow to support its grandiose title. Journalists feel the need to explain each day's ups and downs in the stock market with reference to that day's news. We see this often, but it means very little. It's the trend, not the fluctuations, that counts, and the trend depends on underlying economic conditions. As Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz state in *A Monetary History of the United States*: "The stock market crash coincided with a stepping up of the rate of economic decline. During the two months from the cyclical peak in August 1929 to the crash, production, wholesale prices and personal income fell at annual rates of 20 percent, 7-½ percent, and 5 percent respectively. In the next twelve months all three series fell at appreciably higher rates. . . . All told, by October 1930, production had fallen 26 percent, prices, 14 percent, and personal income, 16 percent."

These developments had far more effect than could any debate over a tariff—especially a tariff whose changes in rates had little practical effect. Friedman-Schwartz blame the collapse of the banking system for converting a downturn into a depression.

When Rothbard mentions Smoot-Hawley, he says "it was at a precarious time of depression that the Hoover Administration chose to hobble international trade." Thus he confirms that the Depression was already underway before it was enacted. Rothbard blames the inflation of the 1920's for bringing on the Depression.

Smoot-Hawley did not give the signal for protectionism to proliferate around the world. The trend towards protection, particularly in agriculture, occurred right after World War I. The war was the death knell of laissez-faire. It demonstrated both the importance of national economic strength and the vulnerability of nations dependent on strategic imports such as food. Smoot-Hawley was a response to restricted overseas markets and foreign dumping. It was part of a trade war that had been in progress for a decade. The continued advance of technology has increased the importance of such strategic factors in formulating realistic trade and industrial policies.

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Reagan repeatedly cited FDR's campaign rhetoric as the genesis of his views. The large and persistent trade deficits caught his administration by surprise. Rather than confront the problem, the White House chose to deny it, grasping at straws like the Smoot-Hawley myth to use against critics. We will pay dearly for this error. With the dollar already gutted, we are headed for a "hard landing." Trade problems did not cause the Great Depression, but they may well bring on the next recession, unless a more active policy is adopted to reduce the deficit.

On 'House Divided'

Thomas Fleming's theme in "Life and Death in a House Divided" (April 1989) appears to be support for federalism as a "due-process" means of effecting political change—federalism defined as "every institution that protects individuals from the brute power of the state." The greatness of the United States of America has resided not in democracy, and particularly not in the pluralistic or participative democracy we have experienced during those last 30 to 50 years, but in federalism, which was the ultimate compromise at our founding, and which represents a diminution of central control.

What he is saying is that the goals of the pro-lifers are justifiable but that their methodology could not be more conducive to strengthening the very opposition they seem to be struggling against. And I agree, except I do not think it stops there.

I suggest that the only point he may have missed is that altruism is a weapon of corrupt leadership. Won't we be surprised if we suddenly realize that these wonderful demonstrators are led by those who know what they are doing? Those who want the results Mr. Fleming prognosticates from their action! Ay, there's the rub.

—*William H. Atchison*
Gillett, PA

What a strange and arbitrary distinction Thomas Fleming makes between a state that commands abortion and one, like America, that "is simply looking the other way." The former, he tells us, is to be met with "resistance and rebellion." The latter is to be obeyed. As the unborn babies are being sucked away, I'm sure they're comforted by the dichotomy.

The association between civil disobedience and anarchy is not one of necessity. The Greek word for anarchy means "without rule." I submit that the majority of those in Operation Rescue do not want to be without rule but are merely responding to the most heinous of America's sins. That they want to inflict chaos on the abortion industry is quite different from the true anarchist, who wants to create a chaos that pervades every institution of society.

We may indeed have no biblical basis for the other instances of civil disobedience that Fleming mentions. But we do have with regard to murder, of which abortion is one form. Proverbs 24: 11, 12 stand as chief examples. These verses are always ignored by the antirescuers when they attempt to make their case and cloak it in the generalities of Romans 13.

—*Jim McNeish*
Iowa City, IA

Thomas Fleming's superb piece on "rights" may get pragmatic results this year or next. The time may now be here when we can't improve in *any* way until we learn that "rights" of any kind are never free, nor ever are beneficial unattached from duties, responsibilities, work, character, sacrifice . . .

I've read hundreds, if not thousands, of pieces on abortion and "rights." Mr. Fleming's are the only truly conservative ones.

—*Stephen Miles*
Falls City, NE

On 'Deconstructive Lyric'

Paul Ramsey's insightful "The Deconstructive Lyric" (March 1989) diagnoses the essential ailment of today's poetry. However, by identifying deconstruction with the self-referential and self-undercutting poetry of, say, a Wallace Stevens, Prof. Ramsey too easily accepts contemporary criticism's jargon-riddled appropriation of literature's rich and time-honored ambiguity. That a great poem or novel "undermines" itself and resists a single "determinate" meaning is a notion some of us remember from ninth-grade English. According to this definition, many of Shakespeare's sonnets are "deconstructive," as are *Paradise Lost* and *Moby-Dick* (remember "The Doubloon"?). And Blake, and Keats, and Hawthorne, and . . .

Having spent the past five years earning a doctorate in English, I know all too well the de Mans, Derridas, and Machereys. They seem to be motivated less by ideology or true philosophical skepticism than by a resentment born of their inability to write compelling poems, plays, and stories. In fact, their stated goal is to render literature obsolete, to supplant art with their own sterile "discourse." We should beware of critics who cannot write and who thus practice such a Criticism of Envy.

—*James A. Scruton*
Statesboro, GA

On 'Letter From the Lower Right'

I just had to let John Shelton Reed know what a juicy (speaking of barbecues) delight his letter in the December 1988 issue was—especially after all the heavy but important articles. A little humor certainly helps to alleviate my conservative blues over the way our country is rapidly disintegrating.

Thanks for a stimulating, eye-opening, "meat-chomping" magazine that I can lend proudly to my left-leaning friends. Sometimes I think they are standing a little straighter after they read it. I can hope!

—*Marion R. Hocking*
Mesa, AZ

LIBERAL ARTS

ON REVOLUTION

Speak of a social contract, and the revolution is made.

—*Metternich*

It is usually reckoned a Whig principle to appeal to the *people*, but that is only when they have been so wise as to poison their understandings *before* hand.

—*Swift*

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LAURO CAVAZOS, secretary of education, is living down to our expectations. As we noted in our January issue, the warning signs were abundant as early as his confirmation hearings, where he pledged to repudiate the works of his predecessor, William Bennett, and basked in the encomiums of Senator Kennedy. If there were any doubts then that Cavazos would prove a pliant tool of the education establishment, his recent firing of Patricia Hines as head of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) has dispelled them.

Mrs. Hines, a recess appointment of President Reagan, enjoyed strong support from congressional Republicans, and both she and her supporters in the Senate had been assured by the Bush White House that she would be kept on in her job. There was, however, a problem: she is a solid conservative, an advocate of demonstrably sound teaching methods such as phonics and of measures to increase parental choice in education such as magnet schools and vouchers. Her presence as head of OERI, which dispenses millions of dollars in research grants, was therefore intolerable to "education research" groups accustomed to feeding at the federal trough. Mrs. Hines soon found herself the target of the educational establishment, and moreover of American liberalism in general. People for the American Way launched a campaign against her, and Senator Kennedy, off on a trip with Cavazos, personally urged that she be fired.

Cavazos, for his part, may not have needed much convincing. When Hines had a speech written for Cavazos endorsing parental choice, he refused to deliver it. In its place, he delivered one in which he accepted a poll showing 71 percent of the public agreeing that parents "should have the right to choose the local schools their children attend," but purporting to be "worried about that other 29 percent," who presumably do not wish to be given a choice. (If you can follow that logic, you too can be secretary of education.) He then fell to whining that parental choice should not be pushed because "we desperately need peace" in the "educational community." It isn't hard to see that the group Cavazos worries about isn't some imaginary 29 percent of the populace, but the members of the National Education Association.

The ascendancy of the education professionals is evident in the remarkably open campaign they conducted against Mrs. Hines. They scarcely bothered concealing their motivations with the usual accusations ("ethical violations," etc.) that normally cover this sort of Washington power grab. The American Educational Research Association, in a memo enjoining its membership to write letters against her, found it sufficient to charge her with such crimes as association with Gary Bauer and the "justifiably much-maligned" National Council on Educational Research. (The latter tried to protect taxpayers from unwittingly subsidizing feminist and homosexual tracts disguised as "research" — how to eliminate "sex roles" and "gender identity" from public education, that sort of thing.) Other education lobbyists have openly called on the Bush administration to "sweep out" all the remaining conservatives in the Education Department.

The educationists may be emboldened not only by rising power but by a feeling of righteousness. Liberals regard the Education Department as rightfully theirs (they *did* create it), unjustly usurped from them by unbelievers, but now ready for reclamation. It is a far cry from a few years ago, when liberal Secretary of Education Terrel Bell felt compelled (as he admits in his book *The Thirteenth Man*) to at least *pretend* he favored President Reagan's agenda. But even Reagan's best appointees managed only to discomfit the education establishment, never to dislodge it. Now we have the "education president," and with Cavazos as his right hand it is increasingly clear what that means: what the establishment wants, it will get. (MK)

CHILDREN'S SUFFRAGE? Minnesota State Rep. Phyllis Kahn (from Minneapolis) has introduced a bill in the State Assembly to give 12-year-olds the vote. She is perfectly serious. The Harvard M.S. and Yale Ph.D. compared all arguments against her initiative to those once used against women and blacks. "It's kind of an adult supremacist attitude," she said.

Kahn selected the age of 12 arbitrarily. "I'd been told that the general instructions in government pamphlets and stories in newspapers are written to be understandable at the sixth grade level. That's how I came up with it." As one of the local newspapers remarked, it was important, too, to pick an age when kids are old enough and tall enough to pull the lever by themselves.

When asked if children would be able to understand complicated legislative issues on taxes and school aids, Kahn replied, "I don't think kids understand them any less than most adults. Why, there aren't more than a handful of legislators who understand the school aids issue and they're voting on it. Besides, people don't vote on issues anyway. They end up voting on gut issues. The general electorate usually votes on people. And I don't think kids' judgment of people is necessarily inferior to that of adults. In some ways it may be superior, because it hasn't been tainted by as much contact with the real world.

"We've had a lot of discussion about how the needs of children haven't been addressed in the political process. I think in the long run, children will fare much better in the political process if they have the chance to stand up for their rights."

Kahn means to work great mischief by a proposal whose main objective is to politicize children against their parents. But since kids would generally vote with mom and dad, the real (and ironic) effect would be to give additional votes to parents according to the number of children in the family — the greatest bad idea to come out of Minnesota since Gene McCarthy.

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ELSEWHERE IN MINNESOTA, a 21-year-old retarded man is about to be treated for his compulsive self-injurious behavior to the tune of $292,000—or more—annually. Michael Untinen has a tendency to strike himself, to try to gouge out his own eyes, and to induce himself to vomit, and is presently being treated with "faradic shock," from a hand-held electrode. The proposed new $800-a-day methods would exchange for the shock more sophisticated and expensive medical and behavioral treatments.

I have some sympathy for the state senator who labeled faradic shock devices "cattle prods," and it is sad to see a case in which a man is so mentally retarded he is piece-by-piece destroying himself. But with estimates of the yearly cost of Untinen's treatment in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, we must pause. A little over three years of treatment and the state is talking about spending a million dollars.

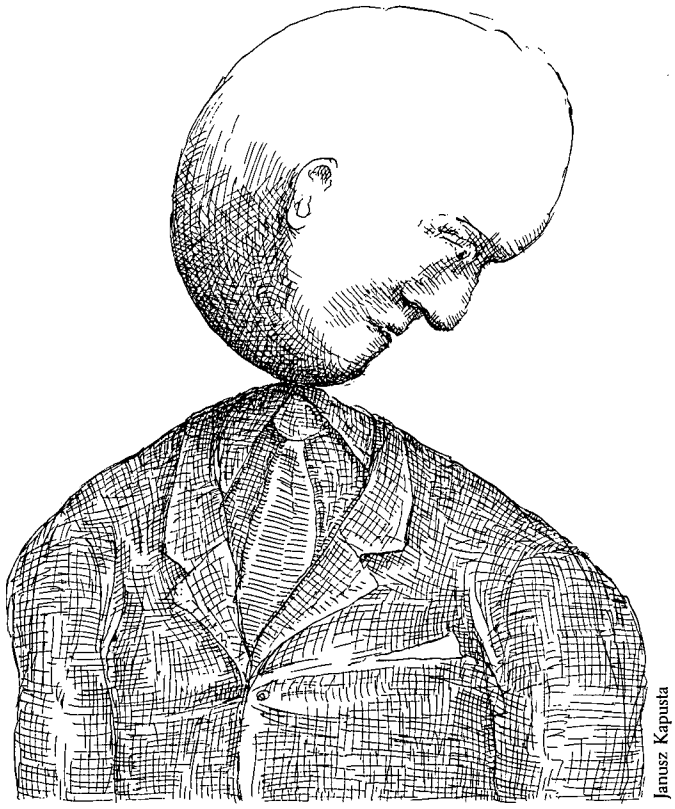
It is not pleasant to put a price tag on human life. Nor would I argue for a return to medieval methods, chaining Untinen up and leaving him to rot. But this is a case of showering perhaps millions of dollars on a man, and for what result? At best, he will only be rendered harmless to himself. We are not an infinitely rich country. We could not save everyone, even if we were. And as it is we cannot afford to tax and spend continually in the effort to try to save a stunted mind from the consequences of its own unhappy fate.

It is the unpleasant duty of a society to set priorities. Surely the somewhat sick must be placed before the hopeless. It seems unwise, with the number of relatively healthy young people who need care, and the number of older citizens who have contributed much to our society but who are now elderly and ill, to make so many of them take a backseat to the unfortunate Mr. Untinen. (KD)

HOW DO THE FRENCH see their revolution today, two hundred years later? Confusedly, suggests a recent poll discussed by R.W. Johnson in the *London Review of Books*. Asked what they considered the most important events of the revolution were, a third answered "don't know," an answer almost as popular as the fall of the Bastille (37 percent), and well ahead of such events as the Declaration of the Rights of Man (16 percent), the execution of the king and queen (13 percent), and the end of aristocratic privileges (10 percent). The revolution is strongly associated with liberty—"no doubt strengthened in the popular mind," says Johnson, "by the fact that 14 July marks the beginning of the summer holiday season"—but it gets hazy after that. Only 30 percent knew the first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Asked to name the three words most associated with the revolution, only 55 percent managed to get "liberty" and 48 percent "equality." "Fraternity" brought up the rear at 43 percent, perhaps because to modern ears, so old-fashioned a word seems inconsistent with a progressive revolution. (Some respondents attributed female suffrage to the revolution. In France that did not come about until 1945.)

To be fair, Americans are scarcely stronger on history, our own or the world's: one thinks of the all-too-typical college student who asked his professor whether Julius Caesar resented his portrayal by Shakespeare. And the French seem to have retained an important lesson: asked who deserved the guillotine, the greatest number (albeit only 21 percent) named not King Louis XVI, but Robespierre. The implication, suggests Johnson, is that "the revolutionary Terror has made a far deeper impression on the popular imagination than the more humdrum, everyday cruelties of the Ancien Regime. The main reason for this is that nobody can imagine the monarchy ever coming back . . . but Robespierre seems a frighteningly contemporary figure." (MK)

IT'S BEEN A YEAR and a half since Tom Wolfe published *The Bonfire of the Vanities*—doing for New York City what Tom Eliot did for June bugs: immortalizing them wriggling on a pin. I'm curious why a similar novel



Janusz Kapusta

SERIES OF SINS

SIN OF PRECARIOUSNESS

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hasn't been written about Washington.

By "similar," I mean a book that attempts to capture the dynamics of Washington life. There are dozens of "Washington novels" published each year, but most of these only deal with the political world. This is a single-mindedness particular to our era; authors in comparable periods of history did not restrict themselves to politics. In other periods everything *but* politics was fair game. Suetonius, full of court gossip, was a popular author in first-century Rome, but few Romans attempted to imitate him. In Edwardian England the politician was as absent from English novels as the businessman is in contemporary American fiction.

Why are "Washington novels" the dominant form of fiction about this city? The answer to this question requires another question, one first posed by Gavin Stamp in *The Spectator*. Take any large metropolitan area. Where in that area can you find residents whose families have lived in their homes for three generations?

In most large American cities, including New York, that question can be easily answered. In Baltimore, for example, the deepest-rooted families are in the working-class neighborhood of Hampden and the upper-crust Roland Park. In Philadelphia, the elites still live in the "Main Line" suburbs to the northwest.

Washington has a few families who have been in town for generations, in the older suburbs of Alexandria and Kensington as well as in Georgetown and the "Gold Coast," a black neighborhood bordering Howard University. But these families are exceptions rather than the rule. In general, Washingtonians are mobile.

This is partly because Washington has grown dramatically since Franklin Roosevelt's taste for centralized government made the city a boom town for bureaucrats, partly because Washington has never had any major industry besides government. The ties that bind both workers and owners to a place are absent. Families may produce generations of bankers or factory workers, but I've never heard of a family that produced generations of civil servants.

So it is that the communities that *do* form in Washington are based on taste rather than tradition. Wealthy lobbyists, think-tank heads, and veteran journalists live in Cleveland Park. Young trendies — "Style" section writers, staffers for environmental groups, and public-interest lawyers — live in Adams-Morgan. Administrative assistants and policy analysts live on Capitol Hill.

Washington is rigidly segregated, despite being two-thirds black, and even though segregation is the result of custom rather than law. Not only are there relatively few blacks in the city's elite professions, but few whites visit the black regions of the city. Commuters can get to their offices without so much as passing through predominantly black areas. The incident that begins *Bonfire of the Vanities* — Sherman McCoy's missing a freeway exit and ending up in a black neighborhood — would not happen in Washington.

But I think the main reason why Washington has no *Bonfire* to call its own is because most Washington novelists, like most novelists, write about what they know. Given the sharp demarcations in the city of race and wealth, and given the lack of authentic community life, Washington novelists write about people largely like themselves — rootless consumers (or producers) of information. I may be wrong; the "Washington novel" could just be another market created by New York publishers. I don't believe, however, that editors on Park Avenue are so narrow-minded that they insist that Washington novelists never have characters standing in unemployment lines or dying of crack overdoses.

Will "Washington novels" ever expand their horizons to include the world in which most Washingtonians live and work? I predict that the first person to write a realistic novel about DC will be a mystery novelist, who will use our recent wave of drug-related killings as a vehicle for exploring the social dynamics of the city. Washington may never have its Tom Wolfe, but the city is ready for its Raymond Chandler.

—*Martin Morse Wooster*

EDWARD ABBEY, a novelist, essayist and sometime ranger and fire lookout with the National Park Service, died on March 14 at his home near Oracle, Arizona.

Born 62 years ago in Home, Pennsylvania, after World War II he discovered that there *is* life beyond the East Coast, and, since 1947, he had been residing in the Southwest.

Abbey, whose idols included Rabelais, Knut Hamsun, B. Traven, Celine, and Beethoven, wrote books on travel and adventure, peppered with philosophical commentary, that took issue with most of the "givens" cherished by unreconstructed liberals and neoconservatives alike (he was once described by a "liberal" reviewer as "puerile, arrogant, xenophobic and dopey" after he confessed, as an aside in one of his books, to believing "that mass immigration from the Latin South — or from any other source — is not a good thing for the working people and material well-being of the United States").

His books included *The Brave Cowboy* (1956), later made into a film by Dalton Trumbo, *Lonely Are the Brave*, starring Kirk Douglas, *Desert Solitaire* (1968), *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), *The Journey Home* (1977), *Abbey's Road* (1979), *Good News* (1980), *One Life at a Time, Please* (1987), and *The Fool's Progress* (1988). He had completed the long-awaited sequel to *The Monkey Wrench Gang* shortly before his death. It is due to be published next winter.

—*Wayne Lutton*

M·O·V·I·N·G·?

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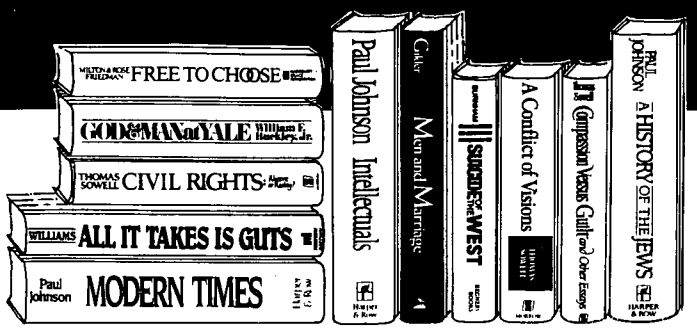

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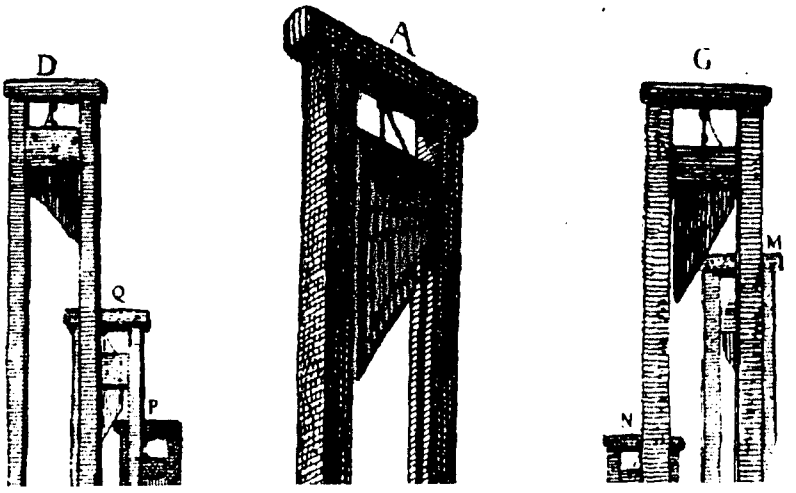

The Legacy of 1789

by Thomas Fleming

One man, one vote. It seems such an obvious, such a simple principle. What can possibly hinder its implementation in South Africa, where blacks are barred from the exercise of citizenship rights, or Israel, where West Bank Palestinian children take to the streets demanding self-government and civil rights, or New York City, where the Board of Estimates (responsible for zoning, awarding contracts, and helping to draw up the city budget) is elected by a system that gives Staten Island's 377,600 people over six times the representation given to Brooklyn's 2,309,600? In declaring the Board of Estimates unconstitutional, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld a lower court decision that found the structure of representation "inconsistent with the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment."

It goes without saying that the Supreme Court has absolutely no constitutional right to involve itself in New York affairs, any more than it had when it interfered in the constitutions of states that gave added weight in their legislatures, by their districting plans, to rural areas. In the early 1960's the Supreme Court struck down any districting plan that was not based on population. As Allan Carlson comments in his recent book, *Family Questions*: "Freed from the rural yoke, state legislatures in the farm states and South began implementing a new set of values. They tossed out the Blue Laws, lifted restrictions on alcohol sales, loosened divorce and sodomy statutes. . . . Gone, for better or worse, were the last political barriers against modernity and secularity. . . . Gone too, in any instrumental sense, was a vision of the farm community as the reservoir of familism and virtue."

Progressive urbanites rejoiced in the downfall of rural America. Now it is New York's turn to feel the lash. If Ed Koch had even half the nerve he claims to have, he would tell the nine self-appointed tyrants on the Court exactly what they could do with their decision.

There is no chance of a mayor, even the mayor of New York, standing up to the unelected guardians of public order. However, some governors have, in recent years, made a stab at resisting the even greater power of the federal bureaucracy. Several states have enacted legislation banning treatment and disposal of toxic wastes within their borders, and some governors have taken emergency measures to prevent entry of hazardous materials into their states. In March, South Carolina Governor Carroll Campbell issued an executive order banning the shipment of toxic wastes from states that do not allow treatment or disposal on their own soil. *The New York Times* described the governor's action as "a clear challenge to the Federal Government's authority to regulate hazardous waste."

What the New York and South Carolina cases have in common is not simply a conflict with the authority of the national government. They once again raise the question of unitary democracy and its consequences, and in 1989 this brings us inevitably to reflections on the events of 1789.

The legacy of the French Revolution might be summed up in the phrase "democratic revolution." Under that title, all nondemocratic regimes—monarchist, oligarchic, military, etc.—are implicitly deprived of their legitimacy and become fair game for revolution. Edmund Burke was inspired to write his famous *Reflections on the Revolution in France* partly in response to a sermon delivered by the English democrat, the Rev. Richard Price.

Burke was outraged by Dr. Price's repudiation of all the complicated forms of social and political life that had evolved in Britain and France. Custom, tradition, and all the nice adjustments to local character and particular need—all of these were to be swept away and replaced by Lockean regimes based upon simple principles: kings and other rulers owed their position to the choice of the people; the people had the right to "cashier" their governors on any supposed

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grounds of misconduct and to form a government for themselves.

Burke tells his French correspondent that in their revolution they had had the chance of reforming a somewhat dilapidated constitution. All the necessary elements were present: "In your old states you possessed that variety of parts corresponding with the various descriptions of which your community was happily disposed; you had all that combination and all that opposition of interests, you had that action and counteraction, which, in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers draws out the harmony of the universe."

It does not take a doctrinaire Burkean to recognize that his brief passage contains more political prudence than can be found in most of even the best books of political sociology. What Burke knew—and radical democrats apparently do not know—is that the complexities and intricacies of human social arrangements cannot be reduced to the moronic formulas of majoritarian rule. Otherwise, the people of Brooklyn will overtax Staten Island to the point that its citizens will either rebel or depart. The dark-haired will discriminate against the fair; men of affluent and moderate means will consign the poor to poverty and despair. North will oppress South; Protestants persecute Catholics; hypocrites bully nonbelievers. This defect in majority rule has been well understood in America since the time of John C. Calhoun, and it has received serious attention from more recent political thinkers as Joseph Schumpeter and James Fishkin.

Ironically, many American journalists who pretend to repudiate the bloody deeds of the French Revolution support nearly all of its basic principles, including those tenets that J.L. Talmon summed up in the phrase "Totalitarian Democracy." In the name of majority rule and the principle of one-man one-vote, enlightened and virtuous leaders like Robespierre, Babeuf, Franklin Roosevelt, and deputy secretaries at the Department of Education will undertake to guide the national destiny until the day arrives when the indoctrination of the masses will have rendered them sufficiently pliable. It is the Western version of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the state that simply refuses to wither away.

I have yet to meet one of these great democrats who did not recoil in fear and loathing from ordinary Americans, and I have yet to read one of their celebrations of democracy that included anything like a working definition that could be applied to real political situations. They are no less willing, however, to call for global democratic revolution in accents that would have warmed the hearts of the Jacobins.

Both the Americans and the French were pleased to describe the respective regimes of George III and Louis XVI as tyrannies and grounded their rebellion on the right to resist despotism. But while the French eventually came to base their claims on a theory of radical democracy, few American "patriots" could stomach the word. The exception that proves the rule is Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson claimed to be a democrat, but what he understood by democracy was a broad franchise that included the responsible elements of society, a severely limited national government, and vigorous state and local governments. He, far more than Hamilton, was the quintessential federalist.

How does a rebel know if his cause is just? Burke thought that "the speculative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end and resistance must begin, is faint, obscure, and not easily definable." If Burke had been a political philosopher, he might have undertaken such an exercise in definition. As it is, few philosophers have done much better. Since Herodotus, writers on the subject (notably, Aristotle) have been content to draw up a list of the despicable acts in which tyrants engage: they deprive citizens of their liberties, make war on the virtuous and well-to-do (remember, the French Revolution began as a revolt of the nobles and the bourgeoisie), commit sexual excesses, trample upon traditions. This tradition was echoed, to a very great extent, in the complaints directed against Louis XVI.

Theorists writing in a more theological vein would say that tyrants are rulers that systematically violate natural law, and that is as good a way as any of characterizing the excesses of Hitler and Stalin. But a religious treatment of political questions will hardly do for a pluralist society like the US, and so much of natural law theory is entirely speculative that it hardly gives grounds for action in concrete circumstances. The cavalier manner in which anti-abortion protesters invoke natural law as justification for their law-breaking is a further indication of its inutility.

But even supposing that we agreed to define a tyrant as a ruler (or ruling class) that murdered the innocent, severed the bonds between parents and children, and deprived people of the fruits of their labor, we should still face the inevitable problem of how to go about overturning such a regime without at the same time undermining the foundations of law and order.

Whatever the sins of Louis XVI, it can hardly be said either that he waged systematic war against natural law or that his successors were not a great deal guiltier than he on every count of the indictment drawn up against the Bourbons. There are other causes for the instability of French politics for the past two hundred years, but one of them, surely, was the disorderly manner in which they went about the business of revolution. Highly irregular.

Our own ancestors, while they occasionally indulged themselves in the rhetoric of natural rights, went about their revolution—if it may be so called—in quite a different manner. In the first place, there was no American Revolution per se. As M.E. Bradford has shown convincingly, there were 13 separate revolutions, each with its own character and leaders. This fact—and it is a fact—has serious consequences that go beyond the question of whether the American Revolution was liberal or conservative.

"When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands that have connected them with another . . ." How often we recite the first clause of the Declaration, without realizing that it constitutes a denial of all the ideological interpretations of the Revolution. Here was no repudiation of a regime, but a separation of one people from another. If our revolution had been engineered by a cabal of individuals in Philadelphia, claiming to speak on behalf of the individual citizens of British America, we should have ended up

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establishing the sort of unitary democracy envisioned by Robespierre. What actually happened was quite different. The 13 separate dominions of the British crown, in defense of their charters and local self-government, as corporate bodies undertook to separate themselves from the authority of the Crown and Parliament.

What took place, in other words, was a war of secession rather than a revolution in the ordinary sense, and while what emerged was a limited democratic republic on a plan consistent with our ancestors' New World (and British) experiences, the specific political arrangements were not foreordained by any political theory; they were the results of trial and error. There is nothing in the Declaration of Independence that would have prevented Americans from setting up a House of Lords or even a monarchy—as Mexico almost did, when it separated from Spain. We might well have made George Washington our first king, although that would have left a succession problem. (It's amusing to speculate on whether royalist Americans would have conferred the crown upon the descendants of Martha Washington. By marriage, Robert E. Lee might have been king. It's enough to reconcile a small-d democrat to monarchy.)

Federalism, and not democratism, was the legitimating principle of our "revolution," and it is federalism—the allocation of local authority to local government, jurisdiction over more than one county or municipality to state governments, and responsibility for defense, affairs of state, and matters that involve more than one state to the national government—that American Jacobins are bent on destroying as an obstacle to their political ambitions. This war against (to use Burke's phrase) every man's "little platoon" is fought under the red flag of democratic revolution.

Like Louis XVI, Robespierre, and Napoleon, most American politicians believe that the second object of politics (the first is, of course, to stay in office) is the concentration of power in a centralized, bureaucratic state, and in their mouths "democracy" is simply a code word for the consolidation of power at the expense of states, towns, and families. There is, however, another side to this consolidation of power, and that is the muddling of the balanced powers of the Constitution. The Supreme Court now not only interferes in local government and in the most difficult matters of private life and state law (e.g. abortion); it claims the authority to bring Presidents to heel. At the same time, the Democratic majority in Congress has increasingly come to see itself as an executive force to rival the President.

Of course, the real beneficiary of the shenanigans of Court and Congress is the permanent government, the bureaucracy. Government agencies that were set up as arms of the executive branch have, over the years, succeeded in gaining such autonomy that American Presidents must content themselves with picking figurehead politicians who pretend to run them. Any attempt to change policy is attacked on the grounds of "politicization." One view of Watergate, put forth at the time by Nicholas von Hoffman, was that in the struggle between Mr. Nixon and the bureaucracy he had attempted to curb, the weaker party—the President of the United States—was the loser.

"In Parliaments men wrangle on behalf of liberty, that do as little care for it, as they desire it." Halifax's maxim on the knavery and servility of Parliament might have been written by a journalist who had observed the Senate's debate on the nominations of John Tower, Robert Bork, Ernest Lefever, and a host of other victims to the virtuous republicanism of Howard Metzenbaum and Edward Kennedy. What a spectacle it was, to see the leading members of the nation's Hellfire club clucking sanctimoniously over John Tower's drinking and Robert Bork's "insensitivity." It brought back happy memories of those delightful rogues in the Watergate era who ran the risk of becoming famous by diving into what Senator Montoya always called "the pit of Watergate."

In retrospect, the Watergate affair was the beginning of a revolution against the constitutional executive power that is vested in the office of the presidency, and in our lifetime we may see that office degraded to the ceremonial status of the Queen of England, its powers assumed not by Congress (whose members are much too muddleheaded to act as an executive) but by the permanent government for which the Congress has agreed to stooge.

We brought it on ourselves, of course, liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats, all of us who did not stand up and denounce the whole farcical proceeding against a President who had done his best to hold the country together in what may have been the worst crisis of our history. But Mr. Nixon was not a likable political leader; he lacked that fine quality of buncombe, Chataquah rhetoric, Transcendental idealism, and religious fanaticism displayed by the greatest Barnums of our political life: Lincoln, Wilson, and Roosevelt. Even a second-rate showman like John Kennedy—for all his womanizing and dishonesty—was able to bring tears to the eyes of loan sharks and college deans, men not ordinarily given much to sentiment or sacrifice.

Of all the hallmarks of revolution that one can name, I think the truest sign of a genuine revolutionary movement is hypocrisy. It is not only that Robespierre "the incorruptible" finds himself making common cause with common scoundrels like Danton; what is worse is the profession of virtue itself, as if being above bribery was a guarantee of anything but the lust for power. Years ago in a *Mad Magazine* parody of *Batman*, the Boy Wonder asks his boss why anyone with so much money would waste his time and risk his life fighting crime. "There are some things more important than money," explained the Caped Crusader. "Power."

If the character of the American rebels was the firm conviction that they should be left alone to run their own lives, it is the character of the French and Puritan and Marxist revolutionaries that no one can be trusted with the conduct of his life. Cities and states are run by directives from politicians who cannot be trusted to keep their hands off Senate pages. Families must see to it that their children are indoctrinated into orthodoxy, and—if we are to follow the instructions of whoever wrote Mr. Reagan's farewell address—if we don't teach Junior about the glories of democracy, by God, he has a right to demand the reason why. Why stop there? Why not have Junior turn in his parents to his civics teacher or local youth leader? Charles I prefered death to the fanatical hypocrisy of Cromwell, and what a contemptible people we must have become to endure these endless sermons on the Democracy that has destroyed democracy. ◇

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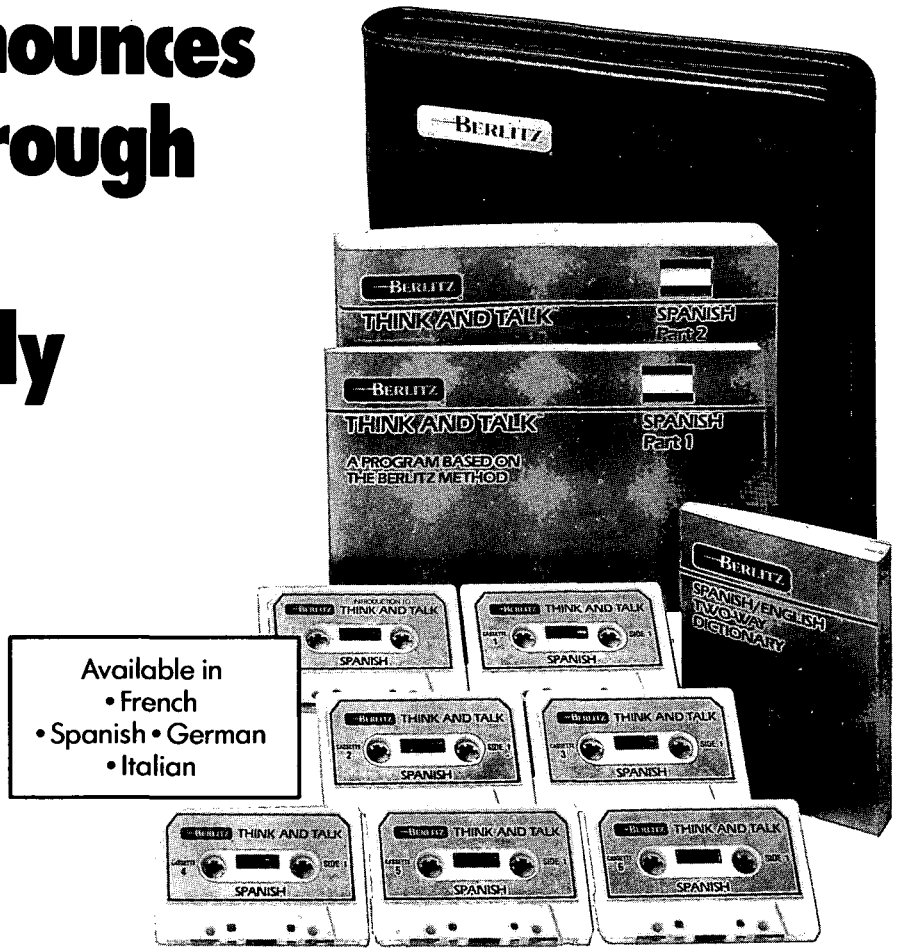

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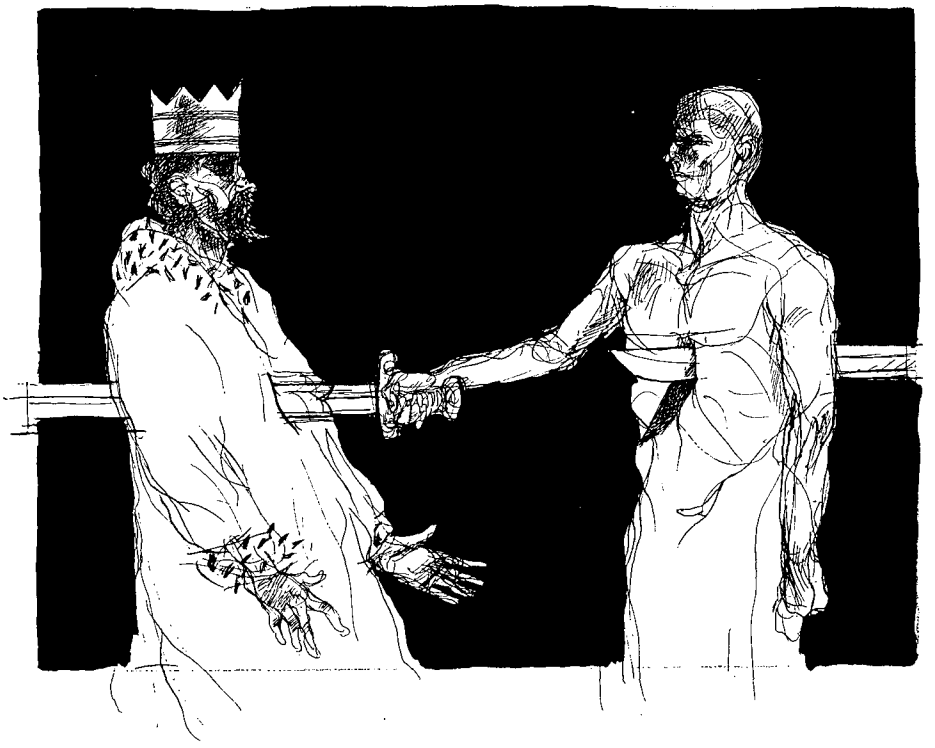

The Cost of Revolution

England & 1789

by George Watson

The twin centenaries of the English and French revolutions are now upon us—1689 and 1789—and they seem fated to coincide with a moment when the word "revolution" has lost all its prestige and even much of its point.

In 1987, for example, Paris was shaken by a book expressively called *The Cost of the French Revolution* by René Sédillot. Its title, to an extent unusual in historical studies, tells the whole story. Sédillot argues that the French Revolution was a game not worth the candle. Some two million Frenchmen are thought to have died in it—some dramatically, in the Terror of 1793-94, most in the revolutionary wars down to Waterloo in 1815. The number is more than France lost in the First World War a century later, and the nation was only one-third as populous as the France of 1914. Some 17,000 are thought to have died in the Terror—some by the guillotine, some by prison massacres, some by mass drownings. That total is modest in relation to the great political massacres of the 20th century—Hitler's and Stalin's—but Sédillot argues disturbingly that it may have been the French Terror that presaged the great holocausts of recent times. The thought is embarrassing. The rhetoric of the modern French state is wholly based on the revolution, and it now stands accused by a Frenchman of reviving the dire notion of killing-by-category which had ended in Europe over a century earlier with the close of the wars of religion. The revolution hunted heretics in its own way, after all—disbelievers in itself. More than that, Sédillot argues that the revolution turned France into a centralized state; an administrative malady from which it still suffers. And its first cause was meaningless. When the Bastille fell after three-quarters of an hour of fighting on July 14, 1789, it contained only seven prisoners, of whom four were convicted forgers (common criminals, in fact, and in no way political prisoners) while another two are thought to have been of unsound mind. By 1794, by contrast, at the end of Robespierre's Reign of Terror, there may have been some 400,000 languishing in French prisons for political offenses. And so on . . .

The book that shook Paris—a city notoriously easy to shake—may leave London and Washington unmoved. Sédillot's point, after all, is much like Burke's in the *Reflections* of 1790—that you cannot make, or try to make, a "complete revolution," as he called it, without self-degradation and tyranny; that civil liberty depends not on the promises of written constitutions like the French, but on sustained stability, the slow and assured progress of societies quietly determined to have more and more of it, bit by bit

George Watson is a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and the author of Politics & Literature in Modern Britain *and* The Idea of Liberalism.

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and one step at a time. Burke's analysis is the more remarkable when it is remembered that, at the first appearance of the *Reflections*, France was still a constitutional monarchy and intent, as some Englishmen believed, on following the English example after a century of delay. When twenty-year-old William Wordsworth walked across France in the summer of 1790 with another Cambridge undergraduate, he saw and applauded in his heart what looked like an outcome dear to all Englishmen, or deserving to be so. He did not then visit Paris, being on a walking-tour to Switzerland. But the news from the capital was all good: Louis XVI enthroned in the Champ de Mars among his subjects to celebrate the first anniversary of the fall of tyranny, land distributed to the peasants, a Declaration of the Rights of Man to match the British Bill of Rights, and a land at peace and in liberty.

What Burke sniffed in the last months of 1789, and intemperately condemned, was a spirit of absolute change. He had cautiously conceded the case of Washington and his friends some 15 years earlier, in a pragmatic if not in a principled sense. The American rebels of 1775-6 might be morally and legally wrong, he held, to claim that England had no right to tax them while their defense was paid for by England, but it might be more sensible to concede the point on magnanimous grounds: "Great empires and little minds go ill together." But then Washington and his friends, in the common judgment of the 1770's, were not making a revolution, and it was a rare Englishman or American who used or knew the phrase "the American Revolution" before the 19th century. To English ears down to the 1790's there was only one revolution that counted — the English Revolution of 1689; and it represented the greatest event in the secular history of all mankind. Ironic, then, that France in 1989 seems likely to celebrate her revolution only with a sour, or, at best, appraising glance; odder still that the English seem unlikely to celebrate theirs at all, in their heart of hearts, though formal tributes are afoot. But then if there breathes a single Englishman who thinks of himself as living in a revolutionary state, I have yet to meet him.

It is striking that Burke, the elderly Whig, and Wordsworth, the young radical, though separated in birth by over 40 years, hardly differed in their view of what France needed in 1789. She needed an English revolution — a turn of events, that is, to produce a constitutional state much like the English one. Every Englishman knew the French by tradition to be slaves: "We shall soon be landed in France," says an ardent young man to his bride in Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), "where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected." Goldsmith was a Tory, but he wholly accepted what has since come to be called the Whig Interpretation of History, which was the view of all but a few 18th-century Englishmen. The Glorious Revolution of 1689 was an example of liberty to all the world. At the opening of his *Reflections*, Burke remarks that he belonged to "more clubs than one in which the constitution of this kingdom and the principles of the Glorious Revolution are held in high reverence," and such reverence was highly competitive. Even David Hume, a skeptical Scottish Tory, did not deny in his *History of Great Britain* (1754-6) that 1689 was a great and singular event. It is not that he thought much of revolutions in general: "It is seldom that the people gain anything by revolutions in government," he remarks cooly, meaning violent changes. But 1689 was an exception, and the British people profited by it in life, liberty, and property. By 1789 there was no view available except that the French should strive to follow the glories of the British example. Richard Price, a radical dissenter and friend of Benjamin Franklin, praised the fall of the Bastille in a notorious tract because ensuing events — the recall of the Estates General by Louis XVI and its enactments — demonstrated, in his view, that France was following a British example. How could freeborn Englishmen reasonably fail to welcome the spread of British ideas of government like constitutional monarchy and the rule of law?

When Burke replied in November 1790, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, he had no cause to disagree with Price that the British system was best. His disagreement was factual: he denied that the French were bent on anything as cautious as the British example. Years later, and no longer a radical, Wordsworth was to describe his early convictions in *The Prelude*, where he does not represent himself as doubting that France was following a British path.

> Bliss seemed it in that dawn to be alive,
> And to be young was very heaven,

was the cry of a young Englishman who believed that France was emulating the tried success of the English Revolution. By 1800 both Wordsworth and Coleridge had abandoned their French enthusiasm. But though those enthusiasms were called "democratical," at least by others, there is no reason to suppose that universal suffrage was in the mind of either of them. By 1793 their views were dangerous, as they knew, because France and England were at war: two revolutions had been tragically sundered by power politics and the refusal of the British Parliament to recognize its own children. To their bitter regret, a dream of revolution had turned them into traitors. But like the pro-Soviet traitors of the 1930's, they still believed themselves for a time to be justified by a loftier law.

Enlightened opinion in France probably shared an enthusiasm for the English Revolution, though royal censorship before 1789 now makes it difficult to discern how far that admiration went. Voltaire occasionally praised William III, though always in cautious terms and sometimes in writings not meant for publication. His *Lettres anglaises* (1734), much his most radical book, is full of praise for the tolerance shown to dissenting opinion by Hanoverian England, where he had spent the years 1726-9, among an abundance of implied contrasts with a France that still burned heretics or broke them in public on the wheel. Montesquieu, who settled in England in 1729 — the very year Voltaire left it, as it happens, and the very year of Burke's birth — praised the constitution of England as the world's finest in a passage Burke was later to applaud. England was the enlightened state of all Europe. With one or two small exceptions, like Holland and Switzerland, it stood alone, a pathfinder among nations. Monarchs studied it too, in prosperity and misery. Louis XVI read Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* in captivity, marveling at the nation that could suffer a disastrous civil war in the 1640's and yet achieve sustained

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stability by 1689, only 15 years after Clarendon's death; and with its grim recital of what civil war can do, the book helped to decide the French king not to call out his own supporters to liberate him. The English had got it wrong with Cromwell, in fact, and right with William of Orange: that is a view that would have commanded wide support in England, and enlightened Frenchmen also found it familiar and persuasive.

The quarrel in the English mind over the French Revolution, then, was not in the first instance an ideological quarrel. It was a difference about the facts of the case. The aging Burke and the young Wordsworth might broadly agree on the direction France should go in, if not on the pace at which she went there. They would not have agreed in the early 1790's about whether France was going there or not. In *The Prelude* Wordsworth describes visiting the gallery of the House of Commons as a young man, and a late addition to the poem suggests that he perfectly understood Burke's case against the French Revolution, though that addition fails to mention that Wordsworth must have listened to it mutinously at the time:

> . . . While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth
> Against all systems built on abstract rights
> Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims
> Of institutes and laws hallowed by time;
> Declares the vital power of social ties
> Endeared by custom; and with high disdain
> Exploding upstart theory, insists
> Upon the allegiance to which men are born . . .

By the time Wordsworth wrote that addition to *The Prelude*, probably in 1820, he was already clear that Burke had got it right. Theories that offer a new heaven and a new earth are upstart, unmanageable, and dangerous. The ninth and tenth books of the poem, especially in their account of his second visit to France in 1792-3, are bitter with self-reproach. In Paris he heard in his darkening imagination Macbeth's cry about murdering sleep, and as France moved towards the Terror his anxious mind became a prey to despair and doubt. "I had approached," he writes,

> like other youth, the shield
> Of human nature from the golden side,
> And would have fought, even to the death, to attest
> The quality of metal which I saw.

Back in England, now at war, his mind fell into a turmoil of conflicting sentiments, a sort of mental civil war. Revolutionary France was at once the hope of mankind and an agent of mass-murder:

> I read her doom,
> Vexed inly somewhat, it is true, and sore,
> But not dismayed, not taking to the shame
> Of a false prophet; but roused up, I stuck
> More firmly to old tenets and, to prove
> Their temper, strained them more; and thus, in heat
> Of contest, did opinions every day
> Grow into consequence, till round my mind
> They clung, as if they were the life of it.

Most terribly, he hints at a readiness to commit terrorism:

> Yet would I willingly have taken up
> A service at this time for cause so great,
> However dangerous

knowing

> How much the destiny of Man had still
> Hung upon single persons.

I do not suppose that implies Wordsworth was at any time in his life a political assassin. But he plainly suggests here that in the early 1790's he stood ready to become one, if called upon. His mood was murderous, in a high-minded way, and bitterly antipatriotic: indeed in one famous passage he represents himself as silently dissenting from prayers for victory and longing for the defeat of his own nation in its war with France.

Why did British intellectual opinion divide so bitterly over the French Revolution and its aftermath?

The question is vital. Foreign revolutions seldom find much echo in the national consciousness. The American Revolution, as it has since come to be called, failed after 1775 to divide British literary opinion in any such remarkable way, and Americans were not even foreigners. The Russian revolution, in our own century, had a broadly similar effect to the French—but not at the moment it occurred, since its literary fruits are largely limited to the 1930's, and its immediate effects after 1917 were modest. Nor did the English Revolution of 1689 divide literary minds in any similar way, though there the analogy is potentially unequal: Jacobite literature, after all, was treasonable and forbidden during the reign of William and Mary, and for long after.

For whatever reason, then, the French Revolution is the great revolutionary event of the English literary consciousness. In a letter to his publisher in February 1821, Byron promised to make his hero Don Juan end his days as Anarchasis Cloots, an international agitator in the French Revolution, as if all roads in modern narrative naturally led to Paris. That jocular letter was written more than 30 years after the fall of the Bastille. Some Englishmen, like William Hazlitt, even contrived to believe in the French cause to their dying day. Edmund Burke, when he died in 1797 at the height of the French wars, was so obsessed with events that he directed the exact place of his burial should not be marked, for fear it might be ravaged in vengeance by invading French soldiery, and his memorial in Beaconsfield parish church to this day reads, "Near this place . . ." Gibbon, who died in the same year as Robespierre, 1794, remarks with horror that when French revolutionary troops were quartered near him on Lake Geneva, officers and men encamped together on the ground without distinction, higgledy-piggledy, as if that democratic spectacle symbolized the whole demeaning horror of the affair. Wordsworth after 1800 reproached himself in the bitterest terms for having given his youthful faith and trust to such a cause and—perhaps for this reason, among others—did not allow *The Prelude* to see print in his own lifetime. Coleridge prudently understated his own early revolutionary commitment when he came to write the *Biographia Literaria* in the summer of Waterloo; and he characteristically omits the one

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disreputable incident from his Cambridge undergraduate days (1790-4) which we now owe to Gillman's *Life* (1838): that as a militant undergraduate at Jesus College, and in the nefarious company of a future Lord Chancellor of England, he had laid "a train of gunpowder" on the lawns of St. John's and Trinity which, being set on fire, burned the grass to proclaim the dread and dangerous words Liberty and Equality. Gillman seems to have heard of the incident when a visitor to Highgate reminded Coleridge of it in his late age, and he implies that Coleridge, embarrassed as he was, did not disown it. The future Lord Chancellor can only have been Lord Lyndhurst, and Trinity presumably remained unaware of his part in the escapade, as they later elected him into a fellowship of the college. No reader of the *Biographia*, that reticent book, would easily guess that Coleridge in his first youth had been a revolutionary vandal and destroyer of private property.

Taken all in all, then, there is nothing like the French Revolution, as events from abroad go, in terms of immediate potency upon literary life. Only the Spanish Civil War of 1936-9 can hold a candle to it, and I wish I could believe that the literary effects of that affair in England were as distinguished as they were abundant. The question why remains; and though that why is not susceptible of a single and simple answer, I propose to settle here on the shifting meaning of the word "revolution," even if much that needs to be said, in consequence, proves dry and lexical.

The French Revolution, within weeks of its outbreak in July 1789, threatened the English conception of history, for good or ill; and it divided public opinion because there were those who welcomed that thread to the English self-image and those who did not.

Revolution was not a radical term to the 18th-century mind, or earlier. It was preservative. That is a fact that some theorists in the present century have found hard to grasp. J.M. Dunn, in his *Modern Revolutions* (1972), has brushed the possibility of preservative revolution aside so carelessly that one suspects it may not even have occurred to him: "a form of massive violent and rapid social change," he remarks in an initial attempt at verbal definition, and one that tries to "embody a set of values in a new, or at least renovated, social order." Europeans—in all likelihood Americans, too—understood the word quite differently before the French Revolution, and they may have something to teach us now. Clarendon, writing in the 1640's and after, studiously refrained as a royalist from applying it to what the Cromwellians had just done—that was a rebellion—and when he later continued his *History* he called the Restoration of 1660 a revolution, since it brought matters back to where they had begun, to a legitimate monarchy. In *For Veronica Wedgewood These* (1986), Christopher Hill has tried to show that the modern, radical use of the word was known before 1688, but his instances are inconclusive, and the lexical evidence still supports the view that for the 17th and 18th centuries a revolution commonly meant a "full compassing," as with wheels or heavenly bodies, and that no reformer and no radical can easily be a revolutionary.

For all that, there may be advantages in avoiding the word "conservative" to describe what revolution meant to Englishmen before and after 1689. That is partly because "conservative" is by now the name of a political party in Britain and of a political idea throughout the Western industrial world; and partly because the implication that one can only choose between revolution and keeping-things-as-they-are is widely and dangerously misleading. Edmund Burke, who was never a conservative and who never called himself one, did not make that mistake. He hated what the French did because, as a parliamentary reformer, he was committed to deliberative change, and he rightly saw such change to be threatened by the all-or-nothing spirit of the wild men of the French National Assembly. Lasting constitutions are not written all at once: if they are to endure and to work, they represent the accumulation of years. The

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A France of Edmund Burkes would not have issued a Declaration of the Rights of Man. It would have emended the existing laws of France one by one and over a period of decades with a view of legitimating human rights.

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American Constitution of 1787 does not represent an exception to that principle, since it derives in large measure out of the accumulated experiences of colonial legislatures. Recent events in the Third World have illustrated Burke's point more fully than he can ever have imagined, but then he already had good cause to feel justified in his own lifetime: he lived, after all, to see the Declaration of the Rights of Man lead to the Terror of 1793-94 and to the tyrannical Directorate that succeeded Robespierre, even if he did not survive to see Bonaparte's seizure of power in 1799. The *Reflections* of Burke are not just sage as analysis. They are also justified as prophecy. A complete revolution must fail. His critics, two centuries later, still have a challenge to answer: what instance can they show of a complete revolution that has succeeded?

The British state was revolutionary in fact and in name. It was founded upon an act of successful and (in England at least) bloodless usurpation by a Dutch prince, whom Parliament in February 1689 invited to assume the throne, with his wife, as William and Mary. "It looks like a revolution," remarked John Evelyn in his diary in December 1688, reporting James II's flight to France; but it is still doubtful if Evelyn knew of any sense of the word other than the preservative. The traditional rights of Englishmen, in the common view, were being asserted by Parliament. Locke, similarly, only uses the word in neutral terms: he nowhere sees revolution as a specifically radical act. Eighteenth-century Whigs saw 1689 as affirming age-old rights: indeed Horace Walpole in a letter speaks of placing Magna Carta over his bed along with the Bill of Rights as twin guarantors of English liberty. Revolution affirmed what was there, against the rash attempts of tyrants to alter.

France did nothing like that after Louis XVI recalled the Estates General in the summer of 1789. It might be

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instructive, in a counterfactual way, to imagine what Frenchmen might have done had they been wholly inspired by the English example of a century before. They would not, for one, have changed the name of their parliamentary institutions from Estates General—a name dignified by centuries of use—into a National Assembly. To change a name, after all, is to risk losing the authority of an institution: the British, by contrast, have progressively changed their institutions over three centuries while keeping such names as Lords and Commons alive.

A France of Edmund Burkes would not have issued a Declaration of the Rights of Man. It would have emended the existing laws of France one by one and over a period of decades with a view of legitimating human rights. It would not have confiscated church lands, but negotiated step-by-step a system of sale at favorable terms and with compensation. It would have kept the monarchy as a figurehead; and kept the nobility, in dilution, by extending it throughout the 19th century into the trading classes and professions. It would have extended the suffrage gently and by stages during the course of that century and beyond, testing the political literacy of each newly enfranchised class as it went.

Above all, it would have publicly declared the French Revolution made by the Estates General a preservative act, restoring and defending the rights of Frenchmen sapped or destroyed since Louis XIV assumed despotic powers in 1660. And it would not have indulged in revolutionary wars under the illusion of a universal creed or a liberating mission for the whole world, but stayed at home. The British, it is notable, made no effort to spread their revolution after 1689. It was for foreigners to emulate it if they might, or count the cost to themselves if they did not.

The French Revolution, in that event, would have proved a far less literary event. It would have had to dispense with much of the admiration of the young Wordsworth and Coleridge, and presumably all of Hazlitt's. Good sense has its costs. None of Burke's majestic fulminations of the 1790's predicting tyranny and woe to France and to the French people; no Wordsworth's *Prelude*, or at least no books IX and X; and just possibly, no Godwin's *Political Justice*, which appeared in 1793; and no radical sense of revolution.

For it is with Godwin, and as late as 1793, that "revolution" becomes a radical word in English for the first time, and few Europeans since the start of the 19th century have doubted that it signifies something radical. The transformation was swift and sure. Revolution is "instigated by a horror against tyranny," said Godwin, writing within three years of the fall of the Bastille. Godwin is no friend to radical revolution. But, like most modern theorists, he thinks it is all that there is. An idealist passionately dedicated to free debate and rational discourse, he detests an act which, being violent, is always likely to create chaos, inhibit the exercise of reason and deny freedom of speech, even of mind. "There is no period more at war with the existence of liberty," he writes, "than one of political violence, where freedom of speech is 'trebly fettered' and slavery 'complete.'" *Political Justice*, that neglected masterpiece of political intelligence, is a radical and an antirevolutionary book; radical because antirevolutionary, antirevolutionary because radical. That was a perception soon to be adopted and extended by Shelley, Godwin's son-in-law, who despised revolution as much as Godwin did, and longed only for peaceful and rational change. That strain of radical thought, thrown up in reaction to the French Revolution and its violent excesses, has since enjoyed its own untold history, mainly in British colonies. Gandhi, for example, was by intellectual descent a Godwinian. And it helps to confirm that almost all the effects of the French Revolution on the Anglo-Saxon mind, and on the minds of its imperial subjects, were in the long run negative. Seventeen eighty-nine was a cautionary tale. Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* (1859) sums up that case: Dickens was a radical, and in his fiction he sees the Paris of the 1790's only as a theater of horror. More recently, and more learnedly, Monsieur Sédillot has confirmed that view. Leave the Bastille where it is—that is the wisdom of the new age. Go round it, and find another way.

LIBERAL ARTS

ACLU WATCH

In February the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union informed 50 school districts that they could change their Indian nicknames or face the prospect of being sued. The MCLU said the threats of suits in federal court were designed to stop disparaging references to Indians. Ten schools in the Twin Cities area got to seriously discussing the question.

Set aside the questions of is *this* the great wrong the ACLU was established to right, jurisdiction, and judicious use of tax dollars. Just enjoy the irony that before proceding nobody at the MCLU asked the Indians what they thought of the matter. In March the Leech Lake band of Minnesota Chippewa objected. "We are opposed to the action of the MCLU, and we question their authority to speak on our behalf," said the band's representative, Myron Ellis. "We view the use of Indian names as a point of pride if they are used respectfully and in good taste. The vast majority of our people do not have a problem with the various school districts using Indian names to represent their teams."

Eugene Boshey, chairman of the Bois Forte (Nett Lake) Reservation, said his reservation Business Committee will probably pass a resolution supporting the "Indians" nickname of the nearby school in Orr. "A big percentage of our kids go to that school," he said.

Included on the MCLU's target list was the Pipestone High School, which uses the nickname the "Arrows." The nickname refers to Robin Hood, however, and not Sitting Bull. Once that little matter of source was explained to the MCLU it did the lawyer's equivalent of "Whoops" and withdrew its threat. What we want to know is, are the English complaining? (KD)

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YOU SAY YOU WANT A REVOLUTION

South Africa

by Leo Raditsa

Everybody knows somewhere inside him that South Africa, since 1984, and really for a generation, has been a set piece in the bloody farce we call "revolution." The one-sidedness of the farce betrays our unacknowledged unease: except for a classic article in *Commentary* by Paul Johnson and a few other pieces, not a word has been said for that country. Recently, a reporter for a major TV network told a friend of mine that there has to be another side to the story in South Africa. It had taken him five years—no, probably his whole life—to ask himself that question.

We welcome revolutions because the fear of war is so strong in us that we cannot distinguish just wars from unjust (except in Afghanistan). We take revolutions for change—the French Revolution mistaught us that—but they are actually our word for conquest that will not call itself by its proper name. This is a lesson the war for Europe that followed the French Revolution should have taught us.

Since the Second World War, these masked conquests we call revolutions have sought, first of all, to break the minds of people outside the countries they attack. Totalitarianism rarely conquers a country before it has won the acquiescence of the world outside. Totalitarian conquest works largely through bluff, through the intimidation of people and governments who have little immediate cause for fear. The question the future will ask of the 20th century, if we overcome totalitarianism, is why it took so long for us to call bullies by their proper names.

In contrast to conquests that wear revolution's mask, real revolutions—a people's repudiation of its government without instigation—are rare. After the French Revolution, they have occurred mostly in totalitarian countries; for instance, Poland. They have all been decidedly against violence, for they see the cowardice and weakness of the regimes they oppose, and have a defiance, confidence, and strength barely imaginable in free countries.

Two characteristics mark the reporting on South Africa since 1984: the absence of serious attention to the changes taking place, and suppression of the evidence of a concerted strategy on the part of the South African Communist Party (SACP), the African National Congress (ANC), and its sister organization in South West Africa, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), to overthrow the South African government. The reforms taking place since 1978 were only acknowledged after the May 1987 election showed Conservative Party advances that might threaten them. The many documents, trial testimony, and so on, showing the SACP's strategy, its infiltration of the ANC and SWAPO, and the training of youths, not only in Angola, Zambia, and Tanzania, but in East Germany, Cuba, and the Soviet Union, have been ignored. In the United States, the most striking suppression has been of the testimony of former SWAPO and ANC members before Senator Jeremiah Denton's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism in Washington in 1982, printed along with many SWAPO-captured documents in two thick volumes entitled *The Role of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and East Germany in Foment-*

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ing Terrorism in Southern Africa. The ANC's murder of the chief witness on the SACP at the Denton hearings, Bartholomew Hlapane (in Soweto, a few months after he testified), was also ignored by the press in the United States, except for *The Washington Times*.

The suppression of evidence about the ANC, SWAPO, and the SACP, and the disregard of reforms, are connected. The denial of change makes it possible to ignore the strategy that wanted to stop such changes in order to show that violent revolution was the way out.

The more things moved in South Africa and South West Africa, the more the violence and international campaign increased, as Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the Chief Minister of KwaZulu, best understood. In a classic letter to Reverend Leon Sullivan in May 1987 he wrote: "Those who want victories by violence fear democratic developments, and they will scream and protest the loudest on the very eve of victory through negotiation."

Steve Biko had perceived ten years earlier the readiness to change that Buthelezi knows the violence dreads. Biko had called the atmosphere in Vorster's South Africa "vibrant with change": "What I mean here is that both sides—that is now Black and White—see the need for a solution in a sense. Both sides reject the present situation."

Biko had been against violence, demonstrations, and confrontations, and for negotiations, because he knew Africans had to take responsibility for themselves before they could take change. Like Buthelezi, he knew the servility of demonstrations, an idea that is all but incomprehensible to the West today. Biko also knew change could only come *through* the government, not by destroying it. That is not only common sense, but testimony to the Africans' respect for authority, which makes it possible for them to distinguish between defiance and violence. This is evident in the words of most of the Denton witnesses, especially those of Delphine Nokonono Kave:

> I felt really betrayed [when she learned the ANC collaborated with the PLO and other terrorists], and I felt I did not want to be a part of what I did not believe in . . . And I later found that in working together with the PLO and other southern African opposition parties that we are—you know, we are—undermining the stabilizing elected governments in southern Africa, not only, you know, in southern Africa, but northern Africa, and in the independent countries, and I realized I did not want to be a part of international terrorism, and communism.

By "opposition parties" Kave meant terrorist organizations.

With the exception of Hlapane, who gave crucial testimony about the SACP in the 50's, the time Nelson Mandela and an Afrikaner of prominent family, Abraham Fischer, devised the strategy the SACP and the ANC still follow, most of the youths before the Denton Committee testified about South Africa and South West Africa after the upheaval in Soweto in 1976 that led to sporadic defiance and violence throughout South Africa for more than a year.

Before 1976, the SACP and the ANC had assumed there would not be much spontaneous defiance within South Africa, only the parody of it. Fischer made this clear in remarks to the underground SACP's Central Committee in 1963: "The main attack on South Africa will come from the outside. But it is essential that a strong local movement

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remains in the country. The task of the local movement is to help direct the outside attack—*and also to make it seem to be a local revolution and not a foreign aggression* [Italics mine]."

Fischer had good reason not to count on wide popular defiance within South Africa, for until 1976, there had not been much of it. In fact, the SACP and the ANC turned to violence to compel adherence to "mass" demonstrations after the "complete" failure of a stay-at-home campaign held May 29-31, 1961, when South Africa became a republic. This was the testimony given at Mandela's trial in 1963-1964 by one of the first members of the ANC's terrorist wing: "The leaders concluded that the main mistake lay in telling the people not to use violence in picketing in order to intimidate those who were inclined to go to work."

Later in 1961, the SACP imposed terrorism on the ANC without its consent or even knowledge, as Hlapane testified: "The military arm of the ANC, also known as Umkhonto we Sizwe, was the brainchild of the SACP, and after the decision to create it had been taken, Joe Slovo and J.B. Marks were sent by the Central Committee of the SACP to Moscow to organize arms and ammunition and to raise funds for Umkhonto we Sizwe."

Hlapane also made it clear that in the 50's the SACP controlled the ANC: "During the period that I served in the ANC and the SACP, no major decisions could be taken by the ANC without the concurrence and approval of the Central Committee of the SACP. Most major developments were in fact initiated by the Central Committee." As an example of the SACP's manipulation, not only of the ANC, but of other front groups, Hlapane gave the Freedom Charter, still the programmatic document of the ANC. The Freedom Charter had been drafted by the SACP without the knowledge of the about three thousand delegates who approved it without discussion in 1955.

The ease with which SACP manipulated other organizations also astonished a young South African student who infiltrated the SACP in the early 60's: "During the months that followed [in 1963] I really did experience at first hand how easily secret Communist Party members on front committees can run non-Communist bodies by good tactical maneuvering on a committee—with the non-Communists never guessing that they are in fact Red puppets." He also explained SACP dependence on fronts: "The main tactic of Communist organizations, wherever they are sadly outnumbered, is to form a 'wide front'—a front comprising all the left-wing liberal elements they can persuade to work with them."

In recent years the ANC and the SACP have manipulated vast fronts, not only to create the appearance of an imminent revolution abroad, but to destroy men and organizations that wanted change but not the overthrow of the government. For instance, the United Democratic Front, recently identified by a South African court as an ANC front, made "No" to reform its defining characteristic, for it opened itself to all, blacks and whites, *except those willing to work within the system*. Buthelezi's rule of thumb for identifying ANC fronts within South Africa is support for divestment. ANC and SACP fronts have played a crucial role abroad, especially in Great Britain through the Anti-Apartheid Movement, with well-documented connections with the SACP and the British CP, and in the United States through TransAfrica and many other organizations. The effectiveness of the ANC's manipulation of its fronts in the United States showed in the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act, passed over President Reagan's veto on October 2, 1986: almost all the provisions of the CAA Act had been made in the ANC's "Appeal to the World Community," issued at a conference openly called a "Council of War" in Lusaka, Zambia, from June 15 to 23, 1985.

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We welcome revolutions because the fear of war is so strong in us that we cannot distinguish just wars from unjust (except in Afghanistan). We take revolutions for change, but they are actually our word for conquest that will not call itself by its proper name.

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In contrast to Hlapane, other witnesses had known a time when there was defiance in South Africa and also South West Africa, the defiance the ANC and the SACP fronts seek to exploit and crush. Here people had rebelled on their own, on nobody's instructions. After the upheavals in Soweto and elsewhere in South Africa in 1976, people had wandered out of South West Africa and South Africa to Botswana and Angola. Abroad they had been forced or enticed into SWAPO and the ANC, often with promises of training and education. Before they knew it, they were caught in terrorist training camps in Zambia or Angola or Tanzania, and some of them were shipped to the Soviet Union or Cuba or East Germany—not the education they expected. At first impressed by Marxism-Leninism, they began to see through its rigidity, especially when they were kept from worship or forbidden friendships or forced to break with their girlfriends. Their defiance made the difference between murder and the fight for change plain to them. They were not about to be turned into killers, and they knew they were being used.

These people were the first to know the struggle between violence against change and change that has gripped South Africa since 1984: escape from ANC or SWAPO camps meant risking death. So did criticism. Kave, the most eloquent of them, and the one who suffered most, summed up this struggle in a sentence that one day may tell the history of the West: "Now I believe that people are blackmailed to be Communists." By blackmail she meant not only the attempts to force her generation to turn Communist, but also the internationalization of the struggle against South Africa that 20 years before Fischer had called the "attack from the outside." "The worst thing that I could not reconcile with was working with other known terrorist organizations. They may be fighting maybe for a just cause in their countries, but I do not have the facts about the history of those countries." How many people anywhere know enough to know the difference between what they know and do not know? ◈

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Israel

by Don Feder

There is a revolution underway in Israel—an upheaval that has nothing to do with rioting Palestinians, a burgeoning Arab birthrate, or Islamic fundamentalism.

Like the movement that gave birth to the United States, this is a revolution in the name of tradition. Perhaps counterrevolution would be a more precise term. Its leaders are orthodox rabbis whose bearded, Talmud-quoting followers have brought to Israeli politics a fervor associated with Hasidic prayer.

The revolution's opening guns reverberated in the results of last fall's national elections. Four religious parties achieved significant gains in the November balloting. But after weeks of intensive negotiations, a new Likud-Labor coalition formed, and the Haredi (literally, "fearful ones"—those who fear God—as Orthodox Jews in Israel are called) were relegated to junior partner status.

Still, their electoral advances are an indication of growing influence. In 1984, religious parties polled 206,501 votes, less than 10 percent of the total. In 1988, their vote swelled to 334,442, or 15 percent. Their combined representation in the Knesset increased from 12 to 18 seats.

They emerged from the 1988 election with the swing vote in the Knesset, enough to give either of the evenly-divided big parties a parliamentary majority. They bargained for power—too much, some would say—and lost. In negotiations with Likud, the Haredi demanded control of the influential ministries of Education, Labor, and Housing, as well as support for their agenda.

Finally, frustrated by these exorbitant demands and anxious to demonstrate national unity in the face of the PLO's latest challenge, Shamir turned to Labor for another right-left coalition, similar to the one that governed the nation from 1984 to 1988. The now-dispensable religious parties were awarded minor cabinet positions as consolation prizes.

Despite this setback, the rise of religious parties will have a profound impact on the country. Typically, the US media reacted with the disdain characteristic of its treatment of traditional religion, at home and abroad. Haredi leaders were branded wild-eyed fanatics, budding theocrats, kosher Khomeinies. Reflecting establishment incredulity at the election's outcome, *US News* voiced shocked dismay that the next Israeli government might actually be selected by "a handful of tiny religious parties more concerned with Biblical injunctions than with the Mideast peace process." We all know what weird sorts concern themselves with the Bible.

The New York Times assured its readers that "by far the vast majority of Israelis are non-observant." This coupled with the contention that the "ultra-Orthodox" (what the press disdains, it often designates "ultra," with the obvious implication of extremism) represent only 15 percent of the population leads to the erroneous conclusion that most Israelis are antireligious. Actually, Orthodox and completely secularized Jews are probably the same proportion of the population. The majority of Israelis fall somewhere in between.

Indeed, the religious parties drew substantial support from the non-Orthodox electorate, such as Sephardic Jews who might go to soccer matches on Saturday afternoon, but experience pangs of conscience over the lapse and listen to their rabbis on political matters. On the other hand, some Orthodox probably voted for Likud or one of the smaller nationalist parties, putting the land question ahead of

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Don Feder is a columnist for The Boston Herald.

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spiritual concerns.

Demographics is on the side of the Haredi. Alone among Israeli Jews, in obedience to those much-disparaged biblical injunctions, they have large families; nine children is not uncommon. Today Jews making *aliyah*, immigrating to Israel, are mostly Orthodox; they believe God requires them to live in the land he gave their people. Those leaving (the nation lost 21,000 in 1988) are secularists, whose noblest motivation is the desire for a comfortable standard of living.

The socialists who settled Israel had a pioneering spirit. Today, idealism is found primarily in the religious community, which alone offers a compelling reason to accept the sacrifices inherent to living in a state under siege.

Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, leader of Shas (the Sephardic Torah Guardians party), attributes the growing attraction of Orthodoxy to "the general disappointment over the moral condition of Israeli society. The religious are not plagued by emigration, drugs, crime, and suicide. This makes people think and brings them to vote for religious parties."

Like the conditions of their political ascendancy, the Orthodox agenda is widely misrepresented. Its position on amending the Law of Return, which permits any Jew immigrating to Israel to automatically apply for citizenship, was not accurately reported. It is, the line goes, an Orthodox power grab, an effort to delegitimize Conservative and Reform Jews.

To be precise, the issue is not who is a Jew, but who is a convert. (Not even the most pious Orthodox rabbi would deny the Jewishness of the most assimilated Jew.) The problem stems from the corruption of the conversion process by the modernist branches of Judaism. The Orthodox seek to amend the Law of Return to limit its application to those born Jewish, or individuals who have undergone an authentic conversion.

For 3,500 years the definition of Jewishness was well established: a Jew is the child of a Jewish mother or one who converts to Judaism hallachically (in accordance with Jewish law). Those accepted for conversion must manifest a sincere commitment to join their destiny to that of the Jewish people. (The desire to marry a Jew was never considered a valid reason for conversion.) There followed an extended period of intensive study. The potential convert had to agree to live according to the dictates of the entire body of Jewish law.

In the past generation, Reform Judaism (and to a lesser extent the Conservative movement) took upon itself to amend a process traditional Jews consider divinely ordained, hence immutable. Reform Judaism's response to burgeoning rates of intermarriage was to facilitate conversion by the Gentile spouse. Many of the historic requirements for conversion were discarded, including, in many instances, circumcision for men and immersion in the *mikvah* — ritual bath — for women.

Some of these conversions approached Las Vegas weddings in their seriousness and attention to detail. (The late Rabbi Emmet Allen Frank of Miami advertised eight-hour conversions.) The Orthodox consider such ceremonies a sham. They are concerned about maintaining the historic unity of the Jewish people, and worry about a time when some Jews won't be able to marry others ostensibly of their faith, due to questions about the validity of an ancestor's conversion.

As an Israeli rabbi explained it to me, since the state has taken it upon itself to pass on who is a Jew, that decision should at least be based on Jewish law.

Another area of controversy concerns the application of the Sabbath laws. Again, the Orthodox are cast in the role of despots seeking to make the rest of the nation conform to their level of observance. The Haredi believe they are merely protecting their way of life in the face of a secularist onslaught.

They point to the status quo agreement, an accord between David Ben-Gurion and the leaders of Orthodoxy at the founding of the Jewish state. To secure their support for statehood, Ben-Gurion promised to preserve the religious status quo, including the cessation of public transportation and closing of businesses and places of entertainment on the Sabbath, in those communities where the custom then was observed. The Orthodox never pushed for Saturday closing laws in secular cities like Tel Aviv. But since secularists have begun to press for Sabbath movies and shopping in Jerusalem, religious Jews feel their activism is justified.

There are interesting parallels between the politicization of Orthodoxy in Israel and the rise of the religious right in America. Like their fundamentalist counterparts, the Haredi were essentially apolitical until threatened by an antireligious ethos. In the US, it was the attack on tax exemptions for church schools by officials of the Carter administration that animated the Christian right.

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What formerly was disdained as too worldly was soon perceived to be a matter of grave importance. Every government system must reflect someone's values. If biblical morality is confined to the precincts of church and synagogue, society eventually will be dominated by secularist dogma.

For the Orthodox, a Jewish state that denies Jewish law seems an absurd contradiction. While accepting the pluralistic nature of Israeli society, the Orthodox believe that in essential areas the legal code must reflect Torah values. Besides amending the Law of Return and enforcing Sabbath closing laws, this would include tightening restrictions on abortion and reinstating the ban on homosexual conduct that was repealed last year.

For their part, nonreligious Israelis need the idealism and commitment of the Orthodox. For a nation beset with economic problems and foreign challenges, Israel's religious right provides a sorely needed *raison d'être*. ◁▷

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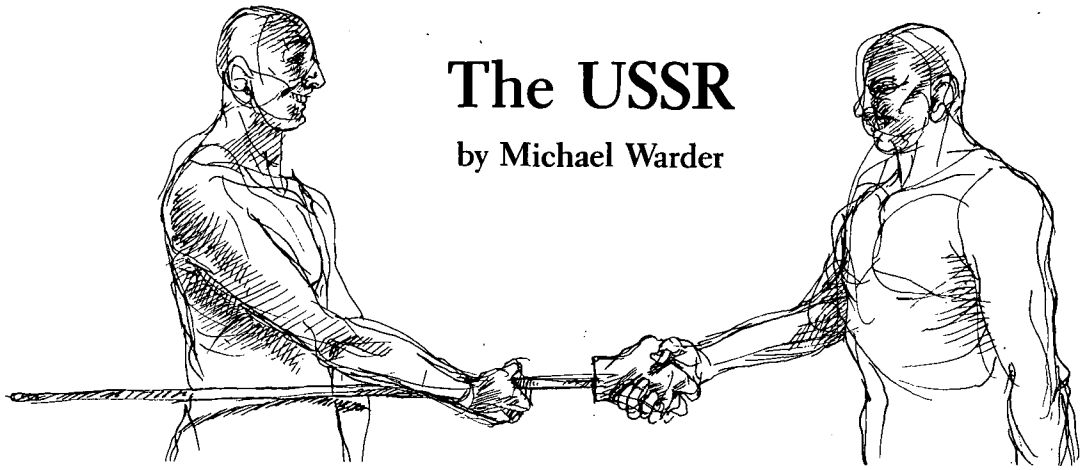
The USSR

by Michael Warder



I can't remember the last time I was in an airport waiting for luggage along with a flight from Managua. Welcome to Sheremetyevo Airport, Moscow. The passport control soldier was in a glass-enclosed booth with a large shoulder-high shelf that hid his checklists. He could look at the calibrations painted on his window to check my height against what was printed in the passport. A mirror behind and above me gave the soldier an opportunity to inspect my backside and the height of my shoe heels. Customs was much easier. The official simply waved me through when my bags went through an x-ray machine. Still, an x-ray machine *after* the plane ride is an unusual debarkation procedure.

The purpose of our tour was to visit religious sites significant to the "millennium of Christianity." Nineteen-eighty-eight was one thousand years after Prince Vladimir of ancient Kiev required his subjects to be baptized in the Dnieper River. Before the trip I had made up my mind that every possible chance I would go off on my own to see more directly the peoples of the Soviet Union. Part of my planning was limited by the fact that the Soviets did not issue the visa until five days before the trip—standard practice. In addition, there was no information about which hotels we would be staying at in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev. This, too, is standard practice and has been so for many years now. Even after we arrived in the Soviet Union, we could not learn in advance of our arrival in a certain city as to where we would stay. *Glasnost* has not really changed the basics of travel to the Soviet Union.

Whatever the word *glasnost* means, it is not freedom of speech or press. A more accurate definition is freedom to criticize Brezhnev, Stalin, or any evil that can be blamed on them. I saw an excellent example of *glasnost* one night when, instead of going to an optional circus event in Leningrad, I went off on my own and happened upon a movie playing on Nevsky Prospect called *Assa*.

In one scene a government stooge watches a television program in which former Soviet leader Brezhnev is getting a medal. The rather youthful audience hooted, clapped, and cheered in mock appreciation of this overdecorated five-star marshall of the Soviet Union who received more medals than could fit onto a full-length coat.

Assa also conveyed a veiled warning to other abusers of government power. A middle-aged security official, jealous of his younger lover's friendship with a rock singer, arranges for the murder of the young man. The young woman, in turn, kills the official.

On another evening, I declined the ballet and went to another movie, *Mirror of Heroism*, which I had seen advertised extensively on billboards. This movie was a bit more difficult to follow, but it dealt with the era of Stalin and the subsequent problems of understanding between the generations. It mocked a Stalinist factory leader and a policeman, both of whom were caught up in their own self-importance and who lacked any capability to think critically about their public duties. It also showed the suffering of the people who labored to make their quotas in the coal mines, and the "heroic" efforts to industrialize.

I was surprised at the freedom of expression in these movies. Both seemed to be saying that there is a new generation and the old ways won't wash. On the other hand, it does get tedious to associate everything bad in the Soviet Union with Brezhnev (dead 6 years) and Stalin (dead for 35). Brezhnev appointees, clinging to past policies to maintain their privileges, still abound, and undoubtedly they and closet Stalinists are the real targets of these movies. The effort Gorbachev is making to purge these old appointees is part of his plan to consolidate his own power.

I had not expected to see party slogans on buildings in the Soviet Union, since I had read that the signs had been taken down as a matter of good taste. In Moscow I saw only a few such signs, but in Leningrad and Kiev party signs and slogans were plentiful. "Long Live Leninism!," "Glory to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union!," the ever-popular "Workers of the World, Unite!," and the like were on top of many major buildings. Perhaps in Leningrad and Kiev the local party bosses feel that they have to try harder. I saw no slogans on billboards that championed *perestroika*, *glasnost*, or *democraztia*. One local said that the building signs conveyed the older slogans because it was rather costly to change them, and that the newer slogans could be seen, though I never did.

There are many things that Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev have in common. Each of their respective metro systems is named after Lenin, and each of these cities has a supersaturation of pictures, statues, lapel pins, memorial squares and parks, museums, libraries, and books of Lenin. In fact, a good working definition of a Soviet kiosk is a place that sells Lenin's works and other things, too. There is no criticism of Lenin these days in the Soviet Union, and the guard is ever-vigilant in front of his mummified remains in

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his mausoleum in Red Square. Nor did I see or hear of any criticism of Gorbachev.

I visited the building of *Moscow Pravda* near Pushkin Square one afternoon. On the windows were posters that reflected the Gorbachev line on *glasnost*. There were posters mocking Brezhnev's medals, the paper shortages, the poor quality of consumer goods, and the privileges of the party bosses. When Boris Yeltsin led the party in Moscow, the *Moscow Pravda* reflected his leadership style and priorities. At that time the paper became a very aggressive advocate for speeding up political and economic change. With Yeltsin's ouster in October 1987, the newspaper toned itself down.

I had believed that in this era of *glasnost* Westerners could get European newspapers or European editions of American newspapers at the major hotels. Not so. After four full days I saw my first American newspaper at a kiosk. The problem with the edition of the *People's Daily World* was that it was three weeks out of date and had very little news. It is true that I did obtain two issues of *Moscow News* at our hotels. The difficulty with this publication is that it really does not contain news, either; just loads of sophisticated propaganda that is all the more effective because it is flanked by elements of truth. But to be fair, *Moscow News* has a degree of criticism of the Soviet Union that is sometimes surprising. The Soviet citizens do not have access to it.

One man I met while out for a walk was a journalist with one of the Soviet industrial publications. He was critical of Stalin and Brezhnev and clearly welcomed the changes brought about by Gorbachev. He was sympathetic to Boris Yeltsin and rather bitter about the disadvantages his children had compared to the privileges of the children of the party elite. He was religious, although he did not regularly attend church, and he enjoyed reciting poetry from memory. But just as I was feeling that this fellow was quite friendly to my notions of freedom and democracy, he explained how he thought the party had to return to the original ideas of Lenin. *Glasnost* has real limits in the Soviet Union, and we in the West should take care not to confuse it with our ideas of freedom.

The Arbat is impressive. It is a stretch of about ten blocks on the West side of Moscow that is a beehive of artists, singers, sidewalk "businessmen," and even a protester here and there. I visited it several evenings and saw approximately ten thousand people there each time. There were perhaps a hundred artists doing portraits, that many again simply displaying their wares, and clusters of fifty to two hundred gathered around singers who sang of social and political change.

One night I went there at about 10:30 p.m. and found it rather dark and deserted. Later someone told me that at a certain time the street lights are turned off and everyone departs. There is an understanding that in that place during certain hours people may blow off social steam and the authorities will look the other way—or at least record their information discreetly. I took a picture one night of a particularly good singer (he was in the tradition of the underground folk hero Visotsky), and quite a few heads turned when the flash went off.

I had heard that Gorky Park was going to be developed into the official equivalent of Hyde Park in London. It was to be a duty-free zone of public opinion and was to replace the Arbat. I visited the park one afternoon on my own to see. As you enter the park you can hear heroic music blaring, and I was surprised to see several skateboarders weaving around pedestrians. I found the place where people can spout off and listened to an old Bolshevik arrayed in medals speak in a way that Marx and Lenin would have enjoyed. Perhaps equal time is going to be given for a Western democratic perspective, but I doubt it. For now the Arbat is where the action is.

Money can be rather confusing in the Soviet Union. When you enter the country you have to detail exactly how much money you bring in and in what currencies. Any changing of currencies has to be documented as you go along and receipt for purchases should be saved. Why? The Soviet government wants your money and does not want it to go to the Soviet private sector.

At every Intourist hotel, there is a little *berioshka* shop that sells fur hats, books, booze, cigarettes, native dolls, etc. only for foreign currencies. The quality is good and the prices are better than what you find at a store for the Soviet citizens that deals in rubles. Why? The Soviet government wants your currency, so that it can buy what it wants on the international market. Even the bars in the hotels only take hard currency. It is as if the state runs its own legal black market to get foreign currency. You could say that the Soviet Union is an elaborate conspiracy to obtain hard currency.

But as soon as you leave the bosom of the Intourist hotel, you will meet the black market. It is everywhere. All manner of people on the street will propose every conceivable type of transaction. They will trade rubles for dollars at a rate of 3 or 4 rubles for one American dollar (the official rate is around 1.65 rubles per dollar). I was once offered 10 to one.

Why doesn't the government join the international community and let the value of the ruble be determined by the international market? Prices might rise dramatically; foreign brands might dominate the market; Soviet factories might close down and create unemployment. Autarky has always been the Soviet way.

So far I have been discussing *glasnost* and *perestroika*, words made popular by Soviet leader Gorbachev. I am indebted to Ronald Hingley (*The Russian Mind*) for bringing to my attention another Russian word, *vranyo*. Perhaps the best translation for this word is "blarney." It does not mean "a lie." Pure *vranyo* is done not so much for personal gain as to make a good story. The speaker of *vranyo* knows what he says is not true and knows that his listener knows it is not true. Both speaker and listener suspend their critical faculties to participate in the fantasy and the art of the story. Dostoyevsky wrote an article on *vranyo* and explained how the speaker actually believes what he is saying at the time he says it, and that a good listener will do likewise, especially if he has any manners.

I believe *vranyo* is very helpful in understanding *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and even *democraztia*. No Soviet leader really means that these terms should be taken seriously. Khrushchev, a master of *vranyo*, once said in a moment of candor that the Soviets would forsake Marxism-Leninism "when crabs begin to whistle." In the meantime *glasnost* and *perestroika* are nice stories to tell. ◈

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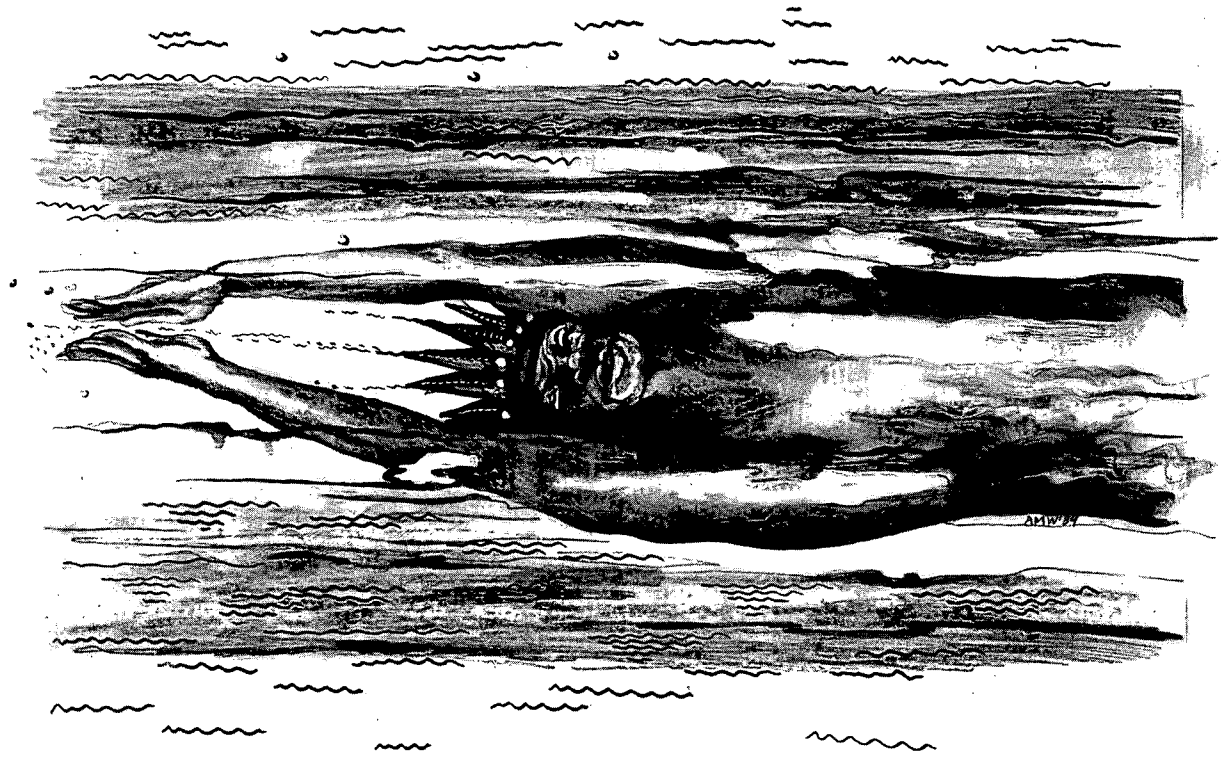
The Caribbean

by Geoffrey Wagner



For Albert Camus, the French Revolution initiated the modern age, killing God in the person of His representative on earth, the monarch. After which "Utopia replaces God by the future," as Camus nicely phrases it in *L'Homme Révolté*. God's anointed could no longer justify arbitrary action in this world by divine transcendence, and man (read "the people" today) became deified, with what results we know. The firing squad replaces the altar, even in Iran; and we no longer need a figure from the shadows like the Ayatollah to remind us that God has become the people.

At this point in the amputation of noumenal values the rebel turns into the terrorist, and abandons existence; as Camus puts it, "To be nothing—that is the cry of the mind exhausted by its own rebellion." Having watched two attempts at revolution in ex-British colonies (Malaya and Grenada), both abortive, I realize Camus is right; there is always a Robespierre waiting to be born. But surely he is wrong in completely ignoring the British revolution of 1642-1649, perhaps because he knew little about it. In this case, not only was the king by divine right beheaded, but his principal cleric, Archbishop Laud, went under the axe four years before him. Since then no prelate has held political office in England, though that gaitered buffoon (and Laud's successor), the Red Dean of Canterbury, made an ineffectual try.

Geoffrey Wagner's book Red Calypso, *on Cuban adventurism in the Caribbean and the Grenadian revolution, was reviewed in the April issue.*

Perhaps also the fact that the monarchy was solidly restored in England upset Camus' theory; after all, the Bourbon restoration of 1816 in France soon came to an end with Louis-Philippe accepting the Lieutenant-Generalship of the kingdom in 1830. "Kings were put to death long before January 21, 1793," Camus concedes, but he makes no mention of Charles I, and brushes aside regicides like Ravaillac and Damiens as seeking reform rather than revolution. "They wanted another king and that was all. It never occurred to them that the throne could remain empty forever." It did to John Milton. Camus' lacuna or blind spot as regards England is made good in a copious compilation of contemporary sources, *The Good Old Cause*, edited by two Oxford Marxist dons, Christopher Hill and Edmund Dell. (That book was reviewed by Hugh Trevor-Roper under the heading "Up Hill and Down Dell.")

In 1979 I watched a handful of West Indians, mostly trained in London and assisted by Cubans, topple a defenseless parliamentary government in Grenada, then as now an independent Windward Island in the Caribbean. They were led by a handsome rabble-rouser called Maurice Bishop who was to end up playing a mixture of Kerensky and Trotsky (not to mention Barnum) to his assistant Bernard Coard's Lenin in an almost pedantic impersonation of the Russian revolution.

Bishop's "coop de tat" began ostensibly as a reform, but soon lost itself in the mire of a Marxism that could mean anything since it meant nothing—to the average cane-cutter or nutmeg-grower on the island. In fact, since the

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minutes of his Central Committee were captured by the incoming 82nd Airborne Intelligence in 1983, we now know that this group, half-nihilist fanatics, half-South Bronx street gang, spent 55 hours of their last week of office debating the semantics of their rhetoric, all garbed in the revolting nuts-and-bolts jargon of the mystery. Bishop was killed (going to his end with a jaw problem like Robespierre's, too) along with his pregnant mistress and sundry ministers. For this bloodbath Bernard Coard, his Jamaican wife, and a dozen henchmen (some assuming lurid Moslem monikers) were sentenced to death by hanging, after trial before a jury of their peers, on December 4, 1986. Their sentences are still under filibustering appeal, aided from the sidelines by the customary pack of liberal lawyers from without (Ramsey Clark, Anthony Lord Gifford).

I doubt if any of Bishop's New Jewel Movement ever read Marx, let alone French authors of the revolution. For when your revo is palpably a disaster, as in Cuba, you create men compelled publicly to admire it, like the Pointe Salines workers imported from Oriente province to build an airstrip. Reality has no say in the matter; the whole rotten magic is called a science, which even Marx was bemused into thinking his theory at the end.

Here Bishop's New Jewel attempt at bloody revolution ran into the highly religious nature of a Windward Island. This has to be felt at first hand to be understood. Grenadians are ardent churchgoers (most, but by no means all, Catholic), and church services and related happenings play a strong social role in the community. Women sing hymns at work. Sunday radio in the region is completely religious, until cricket in the afternoon. Within religion lay Camus' "future" and the New Jewelers couldn't crack it. The island's Bishop Charles was fulminated at for years, as a CIA spy and so on, but he was not imprisoned, unlike the luckless group who tried to start a newspaper and found themselves in lightless cells. For religion allows in the imagination, whereas Marxism encloses it.

So there was great joy when men dropped from those birds in the sky to rescue us. Maurice Bishop's coup, like that of the Ortegas in Nicaragua, and that of Desi Bouterse in Suriname, took place, significantly enough, in the last year of James Earl Carter's presidency when, as one Iris Murdoch character puts it, "it's not only our destiny but our duty to be powerless." For once we weren't. ◈

Fires in the Bronx

by William Baer

Within the great cathedral's stained-glass light,
the young boy suddenly stirred at sermon's end,
aware, somewhere, this world was flamed with fire,
"And pray for Jozsef Mindszenty—and those now dead."
And after Mass, he moved about the adults,
who spoke of men and women, martyred and dying,
and told of hope and freedom callously crushed
by deadly tanks burning the Budapest streets.

And that same night, the Bronx lit up in fire—
above the elevated subway tracks—
and suddenly, the night was wild with noise,
and fire trucks and children filled the streets.
And as the empty buildings burned, I watched
those furious flames that burst up through the night—
remembering murder in Eastern Europe, and then,
those raging fires, eternal, that never consume.

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An End to the Political Pilgrimage?

by Paul Hollander

Are political pilgrimages a matter of history, or has the phenomenon survived? If so, in what form? Some reference to these questions has been made in the preface to the (1983) paperback edition of my book *Political Pilgrims*, but the years that have passed since then call for further reflections on this matter. History has not stood still: in the light of relatively recent developments in the Soviet bloc, there are good reasons to take a new look not merely at the pilgrimage itself, but at the attitudes that underlie it.

The most striking political-intellectual phenomenon of the last few years has been the growing disjunction between the change and turmoil inside the Communist bloc countries, and the stability of the political attitudes among those who time and again have provided the reservoir from which the Western pilgrims or political tourists are drawn. I call this phenomenon "the survival of the adversary culture." I argued at length in *Political Pilgrims* that it has always been the adversarial attitude, the estranged sensibility, that motivated the pilgrims and political tourists to look for and find glorious alternatives to the flawed arrangements of their own society which they held in such deep contempt. It is these attitudes that have survived intact even while developments around the world, and in the so-called socialist countries themselves, have made it more difficult to find political systems that can be favorably contrasted with Western corruption and decline, and endowed with virtues and values Western societies have failed to supply. The impulse to embark on new pilgrimages is still there, but the number of available destinations has become much smaller.

By the mid-1980's the pace of change — and especially the volume of self-critical disclosures — within the Communist bloc had greatly expanded. Most importantly, from the standpoint of potential pilgrims, internal scrutiny and soul-searching, now officially authorized, sharpened. As a result, neither in China, nor anywhere else in the Eastern bloc, was there much left of the outward self-assurance and self-congratulatory disposition that had earlier impressed visitors in search of political rectitude, a sense of purpose, and collectivized self-transcendence.

The new openness meant that critiques of these systems, which had been thoroughly and ruthlessly suppressed earlier, could now be voiced and widely disseminated both in the official media and in new, semiofficial sources. These revelations eroded, indeed made mockery of, what used to be the major appeals of these systems. By the mid-1980's not even the most determined or visionary pilgrim could find in them the sense of purpose, social cohesion, warm communal bonds, social justice, and egalitarianism, let alone spectacular material accomplishments and other praiseworthy qualities of life that had in the past exercised such a powerful attraction.

It was no longer just the poor record of these societies regarding civil liberties and free expression that made their idealization difficult. The new, Gorbachev-era revelations made clear that these systems faced serious domestic economic crises, and their claims of great material progress — which used to be seen as adequately compensating for the lack of personal freedom — were unfounded. Social problems thought earlier to be peculiar to capitalism

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Paul Hollander's most recent book is The Survival of the Adversary Culture. *This essay is adapted from the introduction to his new edition of* Political Pilgrims, *to be published by the University Press of America later this year.*

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abounded: crime, drunkenness, corruption, environmental destruction, declining public health, the misery of old-age pensioners, the disintegration of the family, shortages of food and basic commodities, declining living standards, old-fashioned poverty—the socialist countries had them all, and they were getting worse, not better. Under state socialism alienation, too, became a malaise that held in its grip not only idealistic intellectuals with high expectations (as has been the case in the West), but the masses of ordinary people as well. No sense of purpose, community, or optimism, but a new sense of stagnation and decline, even decomposition, became the hallmark of these countries.

While Western intellectuals continued to dwell on and lament the ravages and injustices of capitalism, socialist systems increasingly acknowledged the failures of the state-controlled economy—its massive inefficiency and lack of productivity, its inability to meet human needs. Cautiously, socialist leaders sought to reintroduce private enterprise.

There is a huge irony in all this. While state-controlled economies were in spectacular decline and leaders of socialist countries began to gradually dismantle the ideological foundation of these malfunctioning institutions, Marxism continued to bask in the reverence of academic intellectuals in the West. These Westerners continued to cling to it while in the countries where Marxism has been the centerpiece of the official value system, a guide to practice and major source of legitimacy, it became a totally discredited and irrelevant doctrine, and not only for the masses (who never embraced or understood it), but also for the intelligentsia.

For the most part, the estranged, adversarial intellectuals in the West have resolutely averted their eyes from these developments, from the resounding moral and material failures of these state socialist countries. They are especially disinclined to detect any connection between the ideas and ideals of Marxism-Leninism and the sorry state of affairs in the Communist bloc.

The persistence of these attitudes can be linked to the institutionalization of the values that motivated the protest movements of the 1960's, and gave rise to the adversary culture. Signs of the survival of these political and cultural values have been numerous and hard to miss. They include the candidacy of Jesse Jackson in both the 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns, and the support he received not only among blacks (not relevant for this argument), but among the white liberals and especially the academic community.

Another reflection of the persistence and influence of the adversary culture has been the successful frustration, attributable in large measure to the highly-organized pro-Sandinista lobby, of the efforts of the Reagan administration to sustain the anticommunist guerrillas of Nicaragua.

A third indication has been the virtually complete triumph of the moral equivalence school in public discourse—the belief that there are no moral distinctions worth making between the American and Soviet political systems, and that both deserve to be viewed with equal cynicism (though on closer inspection the upholders of this theory tend to be far more critical of the United States than the USSR). A recent version of the moral equivalence argument was made by J. Anthony Lukacs in *The New York Times* in March. According to Lukacs, the death sentence passed on Salman Rushdie by the Ayatollah Khomeini could be compared to the rage American veterans felt at the trampling of the American flag at an art exhibit in Chicago.

A fourth manifestation of the adversary culture may be found in its continued growth and entrenchment in towns controlled or dominated by radical-left groups. Usually these are campus towns—such as Berkeley, Santa Cruz, Santa Monica, Ann Arbor, Madison, Burlington, Amherst.

The recent movement to reform the curriculum in the colleges and universities so as to enhance its "non-Western" ingredients may also be seen as a reflection of this mindset. The "multicultural" or "cultural diversity" courses and curricula generally consist of materials conveying criticism of Western cultural values and political institutions from a Marxist, Third World, or militant feminist perspective—a viewpoint already available in many courses, but now made mandatory for everybody in the new programs.

How have these developments affected the political pilgrimage? While the pilgrimage of Westerners to the Soviet Union came to a halt after World War II, in the last few years a new generation of Westerners has begun to visit the Soviet Union in growing numbers. In the 1980's it has been primarily the longing for peace, and the hope that human contacts at the grass roots level will help to avert a nuclear holocaust, rather than the pursuit of political utopia, that brought well-meaning Westerners and especially Americans to the Soviet Union. (Others, in smaller numbers, go in pursuit of lucrative business contracts, but revealingly enough, trade itself is often justified less as a profit-making activity than as a means for promoting peace and mutual understanding.) Whether or not such hopes are more realistic than those that inspired the earlier generation of pilgrims is debatable.

China, ever since the death of Mao, has lost much of its political attraction. Stories of its embrace of capitalism have flooded the American media and sympathizers can no longer thrill at the high-minded regimentation its totalitarian morality produced, or be animated by the egalitarian fervor of the Cultural Revolution.

Communist Vietnam, while it had its champions during the war and played host to many prominent Western, especially American, visitors, never attracted large numbers of pilgrims. It remained quite inaccessible due to its distance and political controls. (The boat people also made a dent in its supporters' enthusiasm.) Occasional Western delegations in the 1980's were given the usual treatment. Among them was an American church group (composed of members of the Church World Service and United Methodist Committee on Relief) that was profoundly impressed by a model "re-education camp," which it saw under circumstances reminiscent of the well-organized visits to Soviet, Chinese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan model prisons that I describe in *Political Pilgrims*.

Although Nicaragua has taken center stage in the pilgrimages of the 1980's, Cuba under Castro has retained a fair amount of support in the same circles, even though it has remained one of the most repressive, intolerant, militaristic, and economically mismanaged of all Communist systems. It

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has also been a country that 10 percent of its population has preferred to leave (often under difficult and risky conditions) for both economic and political reasons. Such matters are overlooked by the sympathizers, perhaps in part because the Cuban regime, personified by Castro, never lost its outward self-assurance and never showed any hesitation in claiming moral superiority over the United States and other capitalist systems (of which Cuba remains the most vitriolic critic). Presumably, Castro's charisma and durability play a part in cementing the loyalties of foreign admirers: an original revolutionary hero still at the helm and unwilling to dilute the revolutionary purity and idealism of his system by concessions either to "bourgeois freedoms" or capitalistic greed.

Thus, among American or Western European intellectuals on the left it never became quite acceptable to take a strongly critical stand toward the Cuban system. As the exiled Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas observed, "it is not fashionable to attack Fidel Castro; that would not be progressive." Not only that: "It is difficult [in the West] to get ahead as an enemy of a regime like Cuba . . . I encounter this in academic circles everywhere. At Harvard I was asked not to talk about politics during a lecture. In the meantime communist writers like Cintio Vitier and Miguel Barnet were given free reign to talk of nothing else."

◆

The Christian Science Monitor **estimated in 1987 that "1,500 Americans are living and working in Nicaragua." The motives of these people were summed up by a member of a women's brigade intent on building a school: "Going to Nicaragua is a direct act of conscience in opposition to our government's aggression and in solidarity with the Nicaraguan people."**

◆

Jesse Jackson is among the friends of Cuba. His attitude toward it is, as Fred Barnes put it, "similar to Shirley MacLaine's [attitude] toward China in the 1970s, or the Webbs' toward the Soviet Union in the 1930s. . . . Jackson visits the schools on the Island of Youth and finds them 'creative.' In truth they are the essence of totalitarianism, where Cuban children are leached of what a pro-Castro American tells me are their 'backward attitudes.'"

Curiously enough, church delegations and groups are prominent among the last-ditch supporters of Cuba. A spokesman for a delegation of Methodists said, "We saw . . . a country where the great majority of people believe that they are the masters and beneficiaries of a new society . . . we were inspired. Cubans are characterized by . . . a burning desire for the rest of humanity to gain the freedom that Cubans have so recently won . . . We returned hoping that our communities can lead America in developing humility we need to learn from Cuba." Methodist bishops were persuaded that in Cuba those who are imprisoned have opposed policies designed to remove inequalities, and found such grounds for imprisonment far superior to those prevailing in countries like Chile or Brazil where, they averred, it was those in favor of social justice who were sent to jail.

The National Council of Churches study guide praised the Cuban educational system: "Permeating Cuban educational practice is the concept that a new type of society will develop a new type of human being . . . [who] regards work as the creative center of life and is bound to others by solidarity, comradeship and love." Another publication of the National Council of Churches concluded that "at home Cubans have found a new dignity . . . Internationally, the island nation . . . has been adopted as a symbol of revolutionary hope and courage by the Third World." Further south, the Archbishop of Sao Paulo assured Castro on the 30th anniversary of the revolution that he was "present daily in [the archbishop's] prayers" and that "Christian faith discovers in the achievements of the revolution signs of the kingdom of God."

The enduring support for Cuba has also found expression in the sympathetic (though not totally uncritical) report of a delegation organized by the Institute for Policy Studies to reassess prison conditions on the island. Gratifyingly, the participants "encountered a very strong sense of mission in most prison officials. They expressed great faith in their system and . . . seem determined to work increasingly on their plan for re-education and for incorporation of the penal population into work and free society. . . . The regular prison facilities we saw were all clean and hygenic, and we heard no serious complaints in this regard; we heard no complaints about the use of instruments of torture . . . neither did we find any policy of extrajudicial executions or disappearances." Such statements call to mind the laudatory observations of the Webbs visiting the Soviet Union in the 1930's. They noted that "the [prison] administration is well spoken of and is now as free from physical cruelty as any prison in any country is ever likely to be." Debra Evenson, a professor at the law school of DePaul University in Chicago, could not stomach even such restrained criticism of Cuban prisons as was presented by another member of the IPS delegation, Aryeh Neier (in *The New York Review of Books*), and in a vigorous rejoinder assured readers of the Cuban prisons' superiority over American ones.

These exchanges and the prison report preceded by just a few months a 137-page report of the Americas Watch Committee that offered renewed evidence of the human rights violations and overall repressiveness of the Cuban system.

No matter how devoted the remaining supporters of Cuba have been, the major setting of the pilgrimages and political tours shifted by the 1980's to Nicaragua. "Political tourism" may better describe the new phenomenon, since visits to Nicaragua have been for the most part highly standardized, conducted group tours of sympathizers rather than journeys of discovery by distinguished individuals.

A new feature of the visits to Nicaragua has been the phenomenon of volunteering to work on various projects such as picking coffee beans or construction. (This type of visit had few precedents in the Soviet Union, but was modeled on the Venceremos Brigade program of Cuba,

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which brought in sympathizers to cut sugar cane.) Some Americans and Westerners also live more or less permanently in Nicaragua, while others are content to spend a few weeks there on various projects.

The Christian Science Monitor estimated in 1987 that "1,500 Americans are living and working in Nicaragua . . . Since the Sandinistas came to power in 1979 about 40,000 Americans have gone to Nicaragua for humanitarian or political work." The motives of these people were summed up by a member of a women's brigade intent on building a school: "Going to Nicaragua is a direct act of conscience in opposition to our government's aggression and in solidarity with the Nicaraguan people." Elsewhere the volunteers have been characterized as people being "just fed up—not only with societies where they felt s----y waking up every morning but with the whole postcountercultural web of second thoughts and rationalizations that's left Westerners . . . helpless . . . [F]or many of the North Americans and Europeans alike coming here has turned out to be the beginning of the long way back from 20 years of lockstep faith that nobody can ever really do anything anyway, and nothing good can last." The attraction of Nicaragua is also associated with a "renewal of belief in the possibility of a revolution not foreordained to be the cat's paw of either superpower rivalry or homegrown despotism." In other words, Nicaragua is the new antidote to the post-1960's loss of illusions.

In a single year, according to a Nicaraguan government official, 100,000 foreigners visited Nicaragua, of whom 40 percent were American. As the 1986 article quoting these figures pointed out, most of them did not come "to see the natural beauty but to get a look at the Sandinista revolution. Most of them . . . are connected with churches, unions and universities, groups generally sympathetic to the Sandinistas."

Sympathy toward the Nicaraguan Marxist-Leninist government has other manifestations besides the mass political tourism. The Boston City Council proclaimed (in 1988) November 3 "Ernesto Cardenal Day" in honor of the minister of culture, also a poet and priest. Burlington, Vermont, and Berkeley, California, are sister cities of Managua. Across the nation support groups, foremost among them those connected with churches, have collected substantial amounts of money and supplies. In 1987 there was a national campaign aimed at collecting $60 million (on top of another $40 million already raised in 1986). At the anti-inauguration concert held in Washington to protest the Bush presidency, Kris Kristofferson sang an ode to the Sandinistas that included the lines, "You have lived up to your name . . . May your spirit never die! Hold a candle to the darkness! You're the keeper of the flame!"

Daniel Ortega, on his visit to New York City, was honored at a reception at the Riverside Church (then presided over by the Rev. William Sloane Coffin, himself a pilgrim with North Vietnamese as well as Nicaraguan credentials), and basked in the admiration of the assembled celebrities, who included Morley Safer, Betty Friedan, Eugene McCarthy, Bianca Jagger, and Bernardine Dohrn, former Weather Underground activist. Ortega also addressed the congregation of the Park Slope Methodist Church in Brooklyn.

The misconceptions about the Nicaraguan political system and its representatives are impressive both on account of their persistence and repetitiveness, and because of the extraordinary resemblance they bear to those widespread at earlier times regarding other Communist systems. There is a willful, cheerful determination to overlook both the conflicting evidence of the nature of this political system and the lessons of history.

According to Alice Walker, Nicaragua "is a writer's paradise." For a professor of philosophy at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (and a frequent visitor), the Nicaraguan government is "honestly committed to the poor and could be a model to other Latin American countries." A writer for *The Village Voice* reported that visitors to Nicaragua experience "a renewal of faith . . . [W]hat Nicaragua gives back to the Internationals [the volunteer workers] is hope." A minister from Atlanta found that the Sandinistas "have done some things that as a Christian I value very highly. They conducted one of the most sensational literacy campaigns in history . . . it is consistent with Christian values to spread health care to rural areas. They have given land to peasants. As a Christian I applaud that." Even *Vanity Fair* found much to praise in Nicaragua, including its first family. Rosario Murillo, spouse of Daniel Ortega, was said to possess "the charm of a revolution peopled by the young, the brave and the good looking." (The reader may juxtapose this observation with those of Julian Huxley, who paid similar tribute to the "fine physique" of the Russian people he observed; apparently all were "solid, robust, healthy" and approximating the Greek ideal of bodily perfection.) But there was more than charm to Ms. Murillo—"the dreamy poetess who oversees her fiefdom with an unyielding eye; the egalitarian revolutionary who revels in Ralph Lauren, the First Lady of a modest little country"—she was also characterized as "halfway between La Pasionaria [the Spanish Stalinist Communist of the 1930's] and Bianca Jagger."

Recent political tourists are just as certain as those of earlier generations that the citizens of the countries they hold in high esteem cheerfully accept all hardships in the joyous expectation of a better future and because of their appreciation of the good intentions of their leaders. Gerald Kaufman, a Labour member of the British Parliament, wrote, "the Nicaraguans accept all these hardships . . . because . . . most citizens realize that their government is doing its best in exceptionally difficult circumstances, that hardships and shortages are fairly shared."

Presumably these curious perceptions of life in Nicaragua have much to do with the determination of the visitors—as was the case in the pilgrimages past—to accent the positive. A director of a theological seminary in California advised that it was desirable to try "to discard our U.S. ideological lenses . . . and enter into networks of trust." He apparently was successful, since he concluded that "Nicaragua has achieved more freedom, justice and grass roots democracy than any of its neighbors (with the exception of Costa Rica) has achieved in five hundred years." Salman Rushdie was among the prominent Western visitors who recorded their uniformly favorable impressions in a book celebrating the Nicaraguan government in 1987.

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The churches are in the forefront of the support for Nicaragua and the organization of tour groups. In particular the Quakers, and their activist arm, the American Friends Service Committee (plus their offshoot, Witness for Peace), the National Council of Churches as a whole and the Methodists in particular, the Catholic Maryknoll, and the Sojourners (a leftist evangelical group) are the most dedicated to these efforts.

If the Reagan presidency helped nurture the sympathy toward Nicaragua and thereby stimulated the political tours, presumably the Bush presidency will continue to have a similar, though perhaps milder, effect of the same kind. Continued disenchantment at home is likely to remain the major cause of the political pilgrims' susceptibility toward systems that make impressive, idealistic claims and criticize the United States.

It remains to be seen what, if any, long-term effect the cessation of the guerrilla war in Nicaragua may have on its sympathizers and supporters. While in progress it provided the most satisfactory explanations (and excuses) for both Nicaragua's dire economic conditions and the political repression. Since the fighting stopped, economic conditions have continued to decline precipitously, and civil rights have barely improved, either—conditions that may yet have some impact on the continued idealization of the system. The end of the guerrilla war has also made it more difficult to hold the United States responsible for the deep economic crisis.

The points made above imply that the favorable attitudes toward Nicaragua have important rational components, and that when those weaken the admiration will subside. Unfortunately, if history is any guide, that will not happen. The fervent support for the Soviet system reached its crescendo at a time when Stalin's terror was at its peak, the show trials were enacted, and millions were starving. Likewise, the veneration of Communist China peaked under Mao's insane campaigns, including the Cultural Revolution. In neither case were objective conditions a significant factor in shaping attitudes toward the countries and their political systems.

But in the event the Sandinistas' appeal tarnishes with the passage of time, or the craving for novelty overpowers old loyalties, there will be other political systems or movements to be idealized on similar grounds. There are, for example, the radical-leftist guerrillas in El Salvador. Already they have attracted a vocal following that includes Hollywood actors such as Edward Asner, who hopes that they will win power, and who has it on good authority that "the rebel forces are now the most effective institution in El Salvador committed to health delivery."

The continued outpouring of favorable sentiment toward the authorities in Nicaragua (and assorted anti-Western guerrilla movements elsewhere) suggests that time has stood still within the adversary culture. Its adherents have not reexamined their ideals and pondered their alienation in the light of the changes taking place in the socialist world in the 1980's and especially since 1985, when Gorbachev came into power. They have managed to avert their eyes not only from the rising tide of revelations, which are providing a wealth of new information about the general malfunctioning of these systems and their intractable social problems, but also of the truly systematic failings of socialist economies.

Yet there is a limit to both self-deception and the impact of the skillful, organized deception Marxist-Leninist systems create for the benefit of those predisposed to admire them.

Among those estranged from Western societies it has taken several decades for the facts to sink in about the nature of the Soviet system. It may take even longer for the more general, and for some far more disturbing, idea to sink in—that political systems inspired by Marxism-Leninism do not have it in their power to bring about the realization of the dreams of Western seekers of justice, social harmony, and personal fulfillment. ◈

Collectors

by Harold McCurdy

Rows of rose glass, an antique pickle jar,
A canopied cradle from a former age,
Witness to a born collector's rage
To keep what was among the things that are.

She, like the earth itself, laid up on earth
Her frail material treasures: artifacts
Preserving long-outmoded aims and acts,
Having, but for her care, no present worth.

But what worth had earth's fossils until some
Inquiring Leonardo or Lyell
Began to pick at them and try to spell
The sentences they composed? Now, all stand dumb

Before the purport of these hieroglyphs
Teased out of chalky cliffs and shelves of stone.

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-- Congressman Robert Dornan

MW MediaWatch
Vol. Three No. 1 — A Monthly Report From the Media Research Center — January 1990

Newsbites

Worked For Los Angeles Times and Wall Street Journal

REPORTER ADMITS HE'S A MARXIST

"Eugene V. Debs may be my all-time favorite American and Karl Marx my all-time favorite journalist," former Wall Street Journal and Los Angeles Times reporter A. Kent MacDougall proclaimed recently. In November issues for the Monthly Review, "an independent socialist magazine," he indicated that as a "closet socialist having continuously from trouble promoting Marxist ideas in news stories."

He also wrote articles for the American Socialist and commentary. In this? MacDougall reasoned "that while newspaper don't go out looking for stories that make the capitalist system look bad, the best don't flinch from running such stories if they meet mainstream journalistic standards for accuracy and objectivity."

During his days at the Journal MacDougall "took full advantage of the latitude Journal editors gave their own feature story topics and report on them as he proudly recalled how he "introduced readers to the ideas of radical economists ...in sympathetic page-one stories."

Such out experts whose opinions I knew in advance would be biased, and "sought out mainstream authorities to confer respectability on radical views I sought to popularize."

Named MacDougall as a "special business correspondent" stories. "I feel no time making it obvious where my sympathies lay," noting that "of the first dozen stories I was assigned, the leftist magazine Mother Jones and two others

MacDougall got an opportunity to write stories that editors to 'echo The United States-is-running-the-show-for-the-rich equal economies.' Two editors nominated him for a Pulitzer Prize Jones in 1967 to fund a new vehicle for his views. "I picked

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The Janet Cooke Award does not appear this month in order to accurately state the Best Quotes of 1988 section. The award will return next month.

MW MediaWatch
Vol. Three No. 2 — A Monthly Report From the Media Research Center — February 1990

Newsbites

THE *EVENING NEWS* GURUS. On January 23 Dan Rather told bewildered viewers: "A couple of late reports on the Reagan economy today sent up warning flags for the incoming Bush Administration. The government said that retail sales in 1988 rose at the sharpest rate in four years. And another report indicated you, the consumer, may be paying more for what you buy this year."

What? A healthy increase in retail sales is bad news? Yes, reported correspondent Richard Schlesinger who explained that store sales news combined with a slight rise in the producer price index last year means "some economists believe the wholesale price figures released today could mean inflation that year will run at more than seven percent."

How reliable is the CBS warning? Well, in January, 1988 Evening News anchor Bob Schieffer declared: "Everybody seems to think the economy is going to be a big problem in the upcoming year.

NBC'S LUCKY STRIKES AGAIN. If you watched Lucky Severson's portrait of Texas life, you would never believe that George Bush won the state's vote by an overwhelming margin. NBC's *Today* show has been airing an occasional feature called "Cross Country," a series that takes a lighthearted look at American life. On January 10, NBC reporter Lucky Severson drove around Texas in a rickety old pickup

See NEWSBITES, page 2

Bias Comes Through in Labeling, Story Angles

ABORTION DISTORTION

The January 9 decision by the Supreme Court to rule on a Missouri abortion law and the January 23 March for Life marking the 16th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade provided ample opportunity for national news outlets to weigh in on the divisive issue. A survey of the four networks, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal* at the time of the two developments confirmed the results of last month's *Media Watch* Study.

Reporters used the term "anti-abortion" 42 times, but "pro-life" just six times. Identifying the other side, they used "pro-choice" 29 times but never once tagged abortion proponents "pro-abortion." *USA Today* reporter Judy Keen's labeling mirrored the media's general pattern. She opened her January 24 article this way: "As anti-abortion activists marched on Washington Monday, pro-choice advocates prepared for grass-roots battle."

"It wasn't just abortion decided 16 years ago, it was the launching of what amounted to an abortion revolution."

On *Prime Time*, the night before, CNN's Candy Crowley referred to "anti-abortion activists" who hope the Supreme Court's Missouri decision "will be the beginning of the end to abortion," but cautioned: "pro-choice advocates fear it will mean a return to back alley abortions." CNN proved to be the most unfair, issuing nine "pro-choice" tags and the same number of "anti-abortion" ones. ABC's Richard Threlkeld stood out as unpartial on two occasions on his January 9 report he dubbed each side their label of choice.

Despite the fact pro-life spokesmen were quoted more often often (52%) than pro-choice ones (48%) overall, several reports were lop-sided in favor of abortion proponents. On Jan 22, CNN's Cynthia Tsumpui gave the least balanced story, giving pro-choicers two times more airtime as well as calling supporters of abortion "pro-choice" three times and opponents "anti-abortion" twice.

But even if they refrained from the "anti-abortion" label and offered abortion opponents equal time to defend their cause, some reporters did all they could to discredit the pro-life cause. On Jan. 9, CBS' Richard Roth referred to pro-life forces as "a strong and vocal minority [which] has insisted its voice be heard."

After giving time to a Roe vs. Wade attorney to express her discontent, Roth concluded: "Her point is it wasn't just abortion decided 16 years ago, it was the launching of what amounted to an abortion revolution."

(CR)

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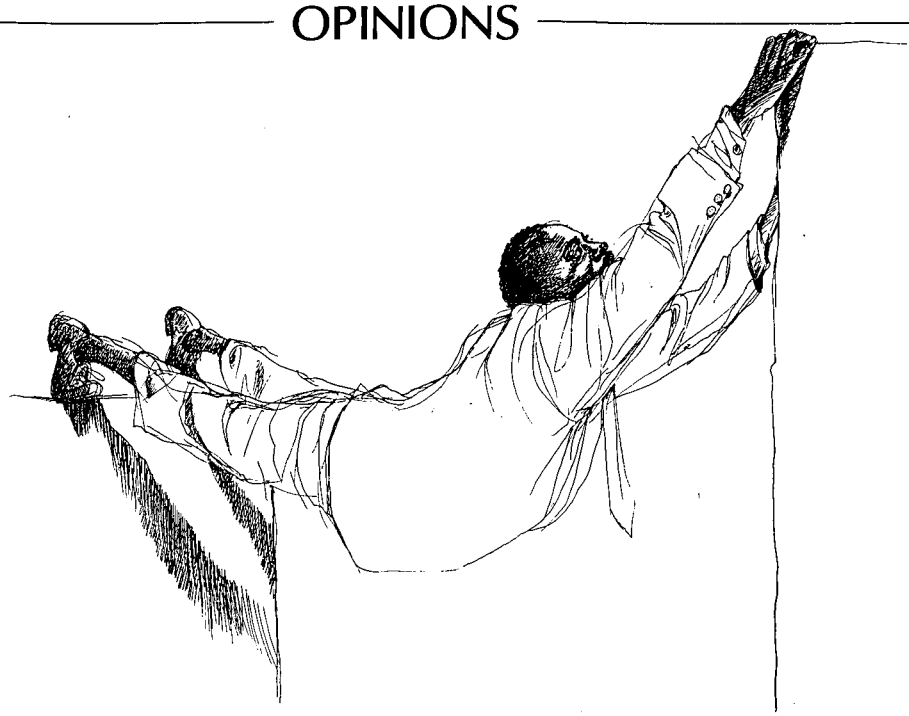

Roots of Radicalism

by Lee Congdon

"The purity of a revolution can last a fortnight."
—Jean Cocteau

Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63
by Taylor Branch
New York: Simon & Schuster;
1064 pp., $24.95

◆

Magisterial works of history are almost always informed by a tragic sense of life. Some recall epochal transformations that were as lamentable as they were inescapable. Still others dramatize the clash of two valid, but irreconcilable, principles. Among the latter, certainly, are the best recreations of our own Civil War, and especially the slavery controversy. The peculiar institution was indeed a moral evil, but that does not nullify the counter assertion that Allen Tate made in his biography of Stonewall Jackson. "The institution of slavery was a positive good only in the sense that Calhoun had argued that it was: it had become a necessary element in a stable society." In the end, we know, the imperative proved to be categorical, but the consequent social dislocation was a bitter harvest for all Americans, Northern and Southern, white and black.

I can only regret that Taylor Branch, the author of this impressively researched and gracefully written history of the early civil rights movement, lacks the tragic sense. A latter-day abolitionist, he recognizes no difficulties in the crusade to end segregation. Nowhere in a long narrative does he make the slightest effort to understand those whose fears and warnings cannot easily be dismissed as the spoiled fruits of dishonor. Nor does he display any patience for those who counseled prudence and a measured pace of change. For him, white moderates were cynical bigots, while older "Negroes" and leaders of the NAACP were pusillanimous quislings. "Hierarchical," "timid," and "inert" are only some of the adjectives Branch trots out to discredit that venerable organization and its director, Roy Wilkins. Indeed, he sees little practical difference between Wilkins, a man of dignity and intelligence, and the vilest of segregationists.

And make no mistake about it, many defenders of Jim Crow were barefaced. Branch rehearses in unsparing detail their unspeakable actions: intimidation, beatings, murders. In the accompanying photographs, one can see hatred and mockery staring out from behind the eyes of those caught at the very moment they were tormenting their passive and defenseless fellow citizens. State and local officials were, if possible, even worse, and Branch calls them back to play their ignoble roles once more: Ross Barnett blocking James Meredith from the door to Ole Miss; George Wallace appealing to the baser instincts of Alabamans; Bull Connor creating an atmosphere in which the bombing of a church filled with women and children could be mistaken for a heroic deed. No Christian, no decent American, can condone or excuse such outrages.

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Nor, of course, should anyone condone the inciting of such violence to further a cause, a strategy that Wilkins deplored and Branch implicitly endorses. This is not surprising when one remembers that Branch is more interested in reinvigorating the spirit of activism than he is in deepening our understanding of a necessary but painful transformation. To accomplish his goal, he set out to uncover the roots of New Left radicalism. Once these roots were severed, he knew, radicalism would wither and die. That is why, in a recent interview, he showed himself able to recall the precise moment in 1963 when, as a high school student in Atlanta, he put down his own radical roots. It was the day he opened a newspaper and saw the infamous photograph of a Birmingham police officer setting an attack dog on a young black man. "Until those dogs in Birmingham, which penetrated my little world of high school sports and chasing girls, I thought that everything in America was wonderful. I had the rosy view that all of the authority figures were doing the right thing."

By the time he came to write this book, the former magazine editor and ghostwriter had convinced himself that all authority figures were doing the *wrong* thing. In the apparent belief that America is a "sexist" country, for example, he consciously places women activists — Septima Clark (to whom he dedicates the book), Rosa Parks, Diane Nash, Ella Baker — on an equal footing with men. To be sure, Coretta Scott King constitutes an exception, but that may be because Branch takes a benign view of Martin Luther King Jr.'s infidelities. Not only did King's close friends tolerate his "demon delights," they (and Branch) "even applauded" them. "They saw sexual adventure as a natural condition of manhood, or of great preachers obsessed by love, or of success, or of Negroes otherwise constrained by the White World. . . . Some of them grew tired of King's insistence that it was a sin. . . ." What, one wonders, would Branch say about Jim Bakker's similar insistence?

That is not the only example of Branch's double standard, however. He discourages as irrelevant and unenlightened any criticism of Bayard Rustin's open homosexuality, while leaving the distinct impression that J. Edgar Hoover's alleged closet variety was utterly contemptible, of a piece with the director's secretive mentality. For Hoover and the FBI, in fact, Branch betrays a particular animosity. In part, I suspect, that is because he lost a court battle to gain access to Bureau documents pertaining to King's closest white friend and advisor, Stanley Levison. Then, too, he regards it as a scandal that the FBI should have suspected Levison, Levison's friend Jack O'Dell, and King himself of harboring Communist sympathies.

Now I do not dispute for a moment that Hoover was an obsessive and vindictive man or that government officials and the American public generally have often exaggerated the dangers of internal Communist subversion. It is clear, I believe, that King was no part of a Communist. Still, it is curious that Branch wants to have it both ways. He speaks more than once about the Communists' commitment to civil rights, concedes that Levison lent financial support to Communist organizations, and quotes O'Dell to the effect that he was proud of his Communist associations. Why then is he so certain that the FBI's charge that Communists had infiltrated King's inner circle was groundless?

Evidently the answer is that he considers the CPUSA to be nothing more than a "protest group," one limb of the radical tree, the roots of which are planted deeply in the fertile soil of the civil rights movement. In the *movement*, not in King himself. *Parting the Waters* is anything but an uncritical celebration of the revered leader. Rather, it is a critique from the left, dramatized as the struggle for his soul, or "identity." For Branch, King serves as a symbol of liberal America in the postwar years, torn between the old, cautious, religiously-framed, anticommunist, respectable, *white* world, and the new, activist, secular, anti-anticommunist, "disreputable," *black* world; between, as he suggests in more than one place, the prim popular music of the 1950's and the uninhibited rock beat of the 1960's.

It is this struggle that Branch makes his principal theme. He begins by introducing us to the young King, dominated by a crusty, conservative father, burdened by an exaggerated sense of sin, and preoccupied with his own salvation. Intelligent and ambitious, he matriculates at white schools and eventually earns a Ph.D. Having in that way entered the white man's world, he is reluctant to rock society's boat. At his best, he is a mere "fireman," who comes to the aid of his racial brothers and sisters but who initiates nothing, a man whom others must pressure to act. Simple folk such as Rosa Parks push him, by the force of their example, to take up the cause of civil rights. And even after he achieves national prominence following the Montgomery bus boycott, he prefers "safe, prestige politics over . . . gritty, dangerous protest."

In particular, King looks to liberal leaders, President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, to carry out the civil rights revolution from above, peacefully and without personal risk to himself. Branch makes it clear on virtually every page that he considers that ambition to be unworthy and futile, a sign of King's failure of nerve. He draws exceedingly unflattering, and quite unconvincing, portraits of the Kennedy brothers. They are unscrupulous and unreliable, more interested in their careers than in the plight of Negroes, whom they regard as politically embarrassing nuisances. We watch with Branch as they cut deals with segregationist officials, place wire taps on King's phones, and wax hot and cold about the extension of civil rights.

There was, however, another, and more radical, side to King. It was precisely the infidelities of which he was so ashamed, Branch hints, that awakened the civil rights leader to the fact that he could act recklessly, with less thought for his person and reputation. His personal demons, his study of liberal theologians such as Walter Rauschenbusch, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich, his friendship with Riverside Baptist's Harry Emerson Fosdick, and his fascination with Mahatma Gandhi combined to lead King slowly to set aside his distracting interest in the next world and to fix his gaze steadily on this one; henceforth, "social justice" would be the sum and the substance of his religion. A Unitarian, Branch heartily approves.

That was still not enough, however,

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for King continued to temporize. Why? Because "the idea that nonadults of any race might play a leading role in political events had simply failed to register on anyone"—including him. Thus he, and liberal America, would have reached an impasse had it not been for Branch's heroes, the black students who organized themselves as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960. These students, Branch insists, won the battle for King's soul. He describes them in the most effusive, yet paradoxical,

terms: human but somehow superhuman, sinners yet saints. Before our eyes, even their apparent vices transform themselves dialectically into revolutionary virtues. If they repudiate their parents and abandon their spouses and children, they do so in order to be free to serve a higher purpose. Some of them achieved fame: Marion Barry (the present, beleaguered, mayor of Washington, DC), John Lewis, Robert Moses. Most, however, remained invisible, nameless foot soldiers in a "grass roots" army.

Impatient with waiting, these young people poured contempt on such adult notions as thoughtful reflection and conciliation. When challenged to defend his views, John Lewis would simply chant, "We're gonna march tonight." And so they did. Furthermore, they sat in at segregated lunch counters in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia, labored against overwhelming odds to register Negro voters in Mississippi, took "Freedom Rides" on interstate buses, went to jail, and refused bail. The more they suffered for their actions, the more eager they were to assume greater risks and to absorb worse punishment.

To King's distinct discomfort, they demanded to know, "Where is your body?" At first, he could only stammer, "I think I should choose the time and place of my Golgotha," an identification with Christ that the students found naive and embarrassing. Was the famous leader a mere clone of "Daddy King," a respected preacher who knew his place in a white man's world? Once, when the family patriarch counseled patience and boasted that he had moved in reform circles for 30 years, an exasperated student shouted, "That's what's wrong."

Slowly, but surely, King Jr. began to come around. Impressed by the national attention that "confrontational witness" achieved, he defended the SNCC students against Wilkins and the NAACP, and took to the streets himself. In their company he learned what it meant to be put behind bars. Before long he was urging the election of "young people" to the board of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference. At the critical juncture in Branch's melodrama, King achieves a mystical union with students who, only minutes before, had subjected him to withering criticism. Recognizing at last the superior wisdom of the young, the leader marshals newly-discovered inner resources and prepares to launch a SNCC-style campaign against segregation in Birmingham. The centerpiece of that campaign Branch calls "the children's miracle": the sending of young children, some not yet in their teens, into the streets and jails. James Bevel, one of the most militant of the Birmingham organizers, bristles when parents object: "Against your Mama," he advises the sacrificial lambs, "you have a right to make this witness." Can there have been any more cynical and unconscionable exploitation of innocents?

Branch interrupts his narrative—to be taken up again in a second volume, *Pillar of Fire*—in 1963, after the March on Washington, where King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, and the assassination of President Kennedy. We may be sure that he will find ways to justify SNCC's subsequent history, dominated as it was by such violent and unsavory spokesmen as Stokely Carmichael and H. "Rap" Brown. Indeed, he provides us with a preview of his concluding study's theme in a revealing aside: "As [Robert] Moses relentlessly pursued the difficulties of universal suffrage, the enemy no longer appeared to be ignorant rednecks so much as universal forces of politics, and the purpose of the civil rights movement not so much Christian enlightenment—teaching people to be charitable and fair—as political revolution."

But even if Carmichael and Brown had never appeared on the scene, SNCC and the radicalized King would have much for which to answer. *The New York Times*, which regularly expressed sympathy for the civil rights movement, put it plainly in 1961: "Non-violence that deliberately provokes violence is a logical contradiction." Worse, it is a historical contradiction, for once summoned, violence has proved to be all but impossible to contain. That was as true in the civil rights movement as it was in Gandhi's much vaunted "nonviolent" movement in India. During their last years, King and Gandhi brought violence with them wherever they went; that, after all, was the point.

If any of this disturbs Branch, he does not let on. In a tragic way, of course, King's martyrdom surrounded him with a still greater aura. In recent years he has seemed to some to be a deity, criticism of whom is a form of blasphemy. To liberals and neoconservatives he appears responsible, democratic, and nonviolent, less abrasive than Jesse Jackson—and safely buried; to the radical left he is the incarnation of the entire civil rights movement, which itself gives life to a much more encompassing radicalism. As a friend of radical causes, Branch knows that the revolutionary spirit of SNCC, compromised by its association with the violence of the late 1960's, can live on only by filling the fallen leader's memory. ◈

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Those Who Can't Do . . .

by Jacob Neusner

Profscam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education
by Charles J. Sykes
Chicago and Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway; 304 pp., $18.95

◆

I wanted to hate this sustained attack on the academy, which condemns everything to which I have dedicated my life, but I loved every word. This man is a truth-teller, therefore he is shrill, obnoxious, abusive, aggressive, offensive, and absolutely right. His indictment spells out the following academic felonies: "teachers who don't teach, students who don't learn, overcrowded classrooms, lousy instruction, the hyperspecialization of the faculty, and the incoherence and narrowness of the curriculum." But that does not exhaust the bill of particulars. Charles Sykes works his way through the humanities, which he finds illiterate and purposeless, the social sciences, now transformed by pseudo-math into a fake science, and the natural sciences, devoted to advancing not learning but lucre. As judge and jury, I find for the plaintiff: a first-rate analysis of a major national calamity — the end of the university as a suitable medium for educating young people.

Sykes deems that professors are overpaid, underworked, unapproachable, uncommunicative, and unavailable. "They have created a culture in which bad teaching goes unnoticed and unsanctioned and good teaching is penalized." "They have cloaked their scholarship in stupefying, inscrutable jargon. This conceals the fact that much of what passes for research is trivial and inane." "They have twisted the ideals of academic freedom into a system in which they are accountable to no one, while they employ their own rigid methods of thought control to stamp out original thinkers and dissenters." American universities are "vast factories of junkthink. . . ." These are not the only items, but they form the well-composed and carefully researched shank of the book.

The indictment may appear scattershot, until you realize that every pellet hits a big fat turkey. Lest you think Sykes has written a mere diatribe, a scan of the contents shows otherwise. The book is orderly and systematic, and it covers scandal after scandal. It conveys, time and again, a single impression: the academic world affords no place for creative and thoughtful people, but only for conformists. Academic freedom serves only those who believe the right things in the right way. Sykes finds the students victimized by a system that rewards research and penalizes teaching. His book covers the flight from teaching and the crucifixion of teaching, on the one side, and the vacuity of the curriculum, on the other. He turns to research, covering matters in general, with attention to "the weird world of academic journals" and academic license, and concludes with his stunning pictures of the humanities ("the abolition of man"), the social sciences ("the pseudo-scientists"), and the sciences ("beyond the dreams of avarice").

Good as the book is, I find the indictment insufficient. His criticism may suffice for the professoriat (though even here I think he vastly overestimates the volume of publication, since in my observation most people publish little or nothing, and he thinks one in ten has published). But he seems to me to have forgotten three other fundamental coconspirators in the demise of higher education in this country.

First come the trustees and legislators, who govern through indifference, in the former case, and who fund without asking tough questions, in the latter. Across the board state universities maintain somewhat higher standards than private universities. The state-supported scholars rarely appeal to prestige and tradition to justify themselves. Many of the private ones do. The total and well-documented fraud that is education at Harvard could not have taken place in Arkansas, for instance (though even there, the legislatures fund, in the end, whatever they are told to fund.) Boards of trustees of private institutions restrict themselves to the ritual of choosing a president, and then back their choice until they fire him.

Second come the administrators, the self-serving timeservers and careerists. I think Sykes pays too little attention to the mediocre quality of most presidents, provosts, and deans. His account of a few impressive figures — Arnold Weber's handling of the Foley case at Northwestern, contrasting with James Freedman's denial of fair play to the *Dartmouth Review* — obscures the virtually unique standing of the few with intellect and courage. The faceless, purposeless president, worrying in this job about getting the next, far more accurately characterizes the universities today. Sykes has failed to assess the impact upon academic life of the Vietnam protest. The great academic presidents of that age were driven off campus, and no one took their place: no one.

Third and most responsible of all come the students, willing coconspirators in the fraud. Most students have no academic purpose in the four years they spend in college. We conduct the world's most expensive baby-sitting operation. Students want not thoughtful, hard criticism of their thinking and writing, but praise and fellowship. Seeing the critic of their work as the enemy of their egos, they flock to the easy. Professors who go along get along, and students love them. The generation of the 80's, at least at Brown, proved utterly lacking in the most fundamental social virtues — incapable of respect, and indifferent to simple decencies such as honor and civility. I had to threaten a lawsuit for defamation to stop Brown students from signing my name to anti-Semitic letters, for example.

The indictment of the students is, above all, what is lacking in this marvelous work of criticism. A personal reference may be pertinent here. In May 1981, I wrote a brief pseudo-speech for the *Brown Daily Herald*, "the com-

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mencement address you'll never hear." It was an invented, undeliverable speech: "We the faculty take no pride in our educational achievements with you. We have prepared you for a world that does not exist, indeed, that cannot exist. You have spent four years supposing that failure leaves no record. You have learned at Brown that when your work goes poorly, the painless solution is to drop out. But starting now, in the work to which you go, failure marks you. Confronting difficulty by quitting leaves you changed. Outside Brown, quitters are no heroes.

"With us you could argue about why your errors were not errors . . . but tomorrow in the world to which you go, you had best not defend errors but learn from them. You will be ill-advised to demand praise for what does not deserve it and to abuse those who do not give it. For four years we created an altogether forgiving world, in which whatever slight effort you gave was all that was demanded. When you did not keep appointments, we made new ones. When you were late to class, we ignored it. When your work came in beyond the deadline, we pretended not to care.

"Worse still, when you were boring, we acted as if you were saying something important. When you were garrulous . . . we listened as if it mattered. When you tossed on our desks writing upon which you had not labored, we read it and even responded, as though you earned a response. When you were dull, we pretended you were smart. When you were predictable and unimaginative and routine, we listened as if to new and wonderful things. When you demanded free lunch, we served it. And all this why? Despite your fantasies, it was not to be bothered, and the easy way out was pretense: smiles and easy B's . . . .

"That is why, on this commencement day, we have nothing in which to take pride. Oh, there is one more thing. Try not to act toward your coworkers and bosses as you have acted toward us. When they do not give you what you want but have not earned, don't abuse them, insult them, act out with them your parlous relationships with your parents. This, too, we have tolerated. It was, as I said, not to be liked. Few professors actually care whether or not they are liked by peer-paralyzed adolescents, fools so shallow as to imagine professors care not about education but about popularity. It was, again, to be rid of you. So go, unlearn the lies we taught you. To life!"

The next four months saw this little piece reprinted throughout the world, and on all manner of TV shows I carried the message that students are involved in a fraud of their own making. It was a message that people are responsible for what they do. I, too, bear responsibility for the fact that, in the aftermath, I was forced out of my department and discipline at Brown, which was Religious Studies; and the academic unit I then worked to found was and still is — and was meant to be — Siberia. When student-failures brought meretricious charges against me, my "peers" managed to drag matters out for nearly two years of trials (ending in complete vindication).

In general, my campus career at Brown was over that May. My scholarship, of course, went forward. Tenure really does protect that very tiny handful of people who really need it, although, overall, Sykes' rejection of tenure seems to me well-argued. I can't say it was a terrible loss to be an academic pariah; to the contrary, I just worked harder in learning and research and published intellectually more ambitious work. But it did leave me sympathetic to books that call into question the self-indulgent privilege, the mindless, costly fraud, the utter waste, that is the world of American higher education. This country needs well-educated citizens. Where are they going to come from?

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One Day in the Life

by Leon Steinmetz

Grey Is the Color of Hope
by Irina Ratushinskaya
translated by Alyona Kojevnikov
New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 360 pp., $18.95

◆

When I was 15 years old I read a book that shattered me. The book was called *SS im Einsatz* ("The SS in Action"). It was a nonfiction book, a 600-page collection of documents — memos, orders, dispatches sent to the units of Waffen-SS, reports from the *sonderkommandoes* in action in Germany and elsewhere. There were some pictures, too, taken by SS photographers. The book was impersonal, detached, and matter-of-fact.

Now, many years later, I have come across another book that has devastated me almost as much, although I'm wiser now and know quite a few things on the subject of that second book. It is called *Grey Is the Color of Hope*, but might as well be called "The KGB in Action." And if the SS book was detached and impersonal, *Grey Is the Color of Hope* is very much attached and *very* personal. It is a book of prose written by a true poet.

I have read numerous books written by people who went through horrible imprisonments, from the torture chambers of the Inquisition to the prisons of Jacobin Paris, and from Hitler's auschwitzes to the present-day Soviet "strict regime" political camps, but hers is one of the most heartwrenching accounts I have ever read on the encounter of a decent human being with vicious jailers, and of a flickering human spirit struggling to survive in a man-made hell.

In 1982, Irina Ratushinskaya, a 28-year-old professor of physics at a teachers' college in Odessa, was arrested by the KGB for alleged "anti-Soviet activities." These "activities" consisted of writing poetry and voicing objections to the torturing of political prisoners in Soviet jails. "I'm here because of my poems," she says, answering one of the jail inmates. "How's that? Your poems against the government, were they?"

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Mark Ellidge

"What is the worst thing in the camps?" Irina Ratushinskaya asked a fellow prisoner who had been there much longer than she. "The perpetual lies," the woman answered.

"No, independent of the government, so they took offense." (Under Soviet law poetry can be qualified as "dissemination of slanderous documentation in poetic form.") In 1983 she was sentenced to seven years' strict (the harshest) labor camp plus five years' internal exile.

Ratushinskaya tells of an episode that, perhaps, could have happened only in Russia. While in jail, she had copied some poems of Pushkin and of a great Russian lyric poet of the 19th century, Tyutchev. When she was transferred from the jail to the camp, the poems were confiscated. She had hoped that they would be returned. But "instead of having them returned to me, I was given a document [which] stated that these poems were found to be slanderous, ideologically dangerous, and for this reason had been destroyed by burning. . . . The Kiev KGB staff are not expected to know anything about literature, and they had simply decided that these poems had all been written by me. . . . So, by courtesy of the ignorance of the Kiev KGB, I was arbitrarily elevated to genius rank: writing about the mountains of Georgia, the depths of the Siberian mines, about thunderstorms in early May . . ."

Ratushinskaya needs just a few strokes to evoke a character. A pregnant woman-prisoner is led by her cell in the transit train. "I see her as she passes my cage: a small, tear-stained face, a shock of hair peeping out from under a washed-out headscarf," or "grey-faced, withered, with bluish lips were some of them; others sought to brighten their pallid faces with defiant slashes of bright, cheap lipstick. My hands seemed to move of their own accord to share what I had with them, while something inside me screamed and screamed its pity for these pathetic creatures . . ."

Her book is about prison. Having been persecuted, tortured, beaten; having gone through the most horrid experience one can imagine a young, intelligent, talented woman to go through in this time of the late 80's, when Auschwitz and Treblinka are no more, still she is not angry, not even bitter. She is rather sad. She feels sorry for them all, even the guards.

> . . . my erstwhile traveling companions . . . Our nation has always referred to those sentenced to hard labor as "unfortunates." And unfortunates they are, and I pity them as, no doubt, they pity me. Certainly I know about the vicious camp "laws" by which criminals live, about merciless revenge, about the exploitation of the weak among them . . . Yet there is something else to them as well—and that I will never forget. I shall try to appeal to that "something else" which exists in even the most hardened criminals, and the guards, and maybe even in that one, who has just peered in through the Judas-hole in the door to check whether I am asleep or not. Oh, Lord, save my unfortunate people and have mercy upon them!

The only ones for whom she never asks mercy are the KGB. Unobtrusively but clearly through the whole book there runs the leitmotif—the SS is not dead. It is still alive, and it is called the KGB.

"It's not my job to prove to you that you're wrong. I don't have the education or the words for that. My job is much easier: to make your life here so miserable you'll never want to come back," boasts the "blonde fiend," a woman KGB lieutenant whom they dubbed "Ilse Koch." And, indeed, she does. (One can't help recalling Goering's frankness at his trial: "I have always bet on villains.") The description of how the author and another political prisoner, an older woman, both on a hunger strike, were stripped, handcuffed, beaten severely by six KGB men, force-fed two liters of a horrible solution pumped into their shrunken stomachs, and then thrown into a damp cell with no bunks and puddles of frozen water on the cement floor—this description can be placed in *SS im Einsatz* without so much as lifting a comma.

And still, this is not all that is there, in this strict regime Soviet political camp. "What is the worst thing in the camps?" Ratushinskaya asks Tatyana Mikhailovna, a woman who was in the "strict regime" much longer than she. And Tatyana answers without a moment's hesitation: "The perpetual lies." This answer can serve as a meta-

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phor not just for the political camps, but for the entire Soviet Union, more, for the entire Communist system. The "perpetual lies" about the Communist ideology, the Soviet constitution, the Soviet peaceful intentions . . .

> ZhKh-385/3. That's the official designation of our camp. What do the letters "Zh" and "Kh" stand for? Why, the Russian words for "Railway Property." That's because, officially, there are no concentration camps in the USSR! And the number "385"? Well, the authorities must keep count of the non-existent camps, mustn't they?

If I were asked to formulate in one sentence what Ratushinskaya's book is about, I would say it is about the KGB attempt to destroy the human spirit and to mutilate the soul.

> . . . only by a maximum exertion of will is it possible to retain one's . . . scale of values. . . . But in doing so, you must not, under any circumstances, allow yourself to hate. Not because your tormentors have not earned it. But if you allow hatred to take root, it will flourish and spread during your years in the camps . . . and ultimately corrode and warp your soul. You will no longer be yourself, your identity will be destroyed, all that will remain will be a hysterical maddened and bedevilled husk of the human being that once was. And this is what will come before God should such a creature die while still behind bars. And this is just what "they" want.

And that's exactly what "they" can't do with people like Ratushinskaya and the other women, the "political" inmates.

Reading about these women, I kept asking myself of whom do they remind me so much, and then I realized, yes, of course, the early Christians in the time of Nero, only instead of holding their religious rites in secret in the catacombs, they hold theirs for human dignity and human liberty in the open, in their "Small Zone," this camp within a camp amidst the swamps of Soviet Mordovia.

"Keep beating my heart! Keep beating," Ratushinskaya tells herself. Yes, please, keep beating! one wants to join in. In 1986, after spending three years and seven months in the camp, Ratushinskaya was released and allowed to emigrate. She has survived. "I did not betray my conscience, and the man I love was waiting for me when I came out . . . What else can one ask for?"

Besides his contributions to Chronicles, *Leon Steinmetz's essays have appeared in* Commentary *and* National Review. *He teaches creative writing at Harvard.*

An Audience of One

by Thomas McGonigle

Salazar Blinks
by David Slavitt
New York: Atheneum; 159 pp., $16.95

◆

Any literary effort by David Slavitt is a complicated business for a reviewer. The complexity arises not immediately from the work itself, but from the prolific nature of Slavitt. To date, he is the author of 13 works of fiction, 14 books of poetry or translation, two books of nonfiction, at least eight pseudonymous novels, to say nothing of a steady stream of reviews and essays.

Unlike Anthony Burgess, with his *A Clockwork Orange*, or Vladimir Nabokov, with his *Lolita*, Slavitt has yet to write that one single work about which all the other books and writing can orbit. The result is that each new book has to be approached on its own, and it almost seems that the reviewer needs to recapitulate Slavitt's career in order to get at this one book. I am sure, one day, there will be someone who will make the connections, tie up the loose ends, and package up Mr. Slavitt. I cannot do that here.

Salazar Blinks concerns itself with modern Portugal just after longtime strongman Antonio Salazar suffers a paralyzing stroke. Because of the length of his rule and the need for some sort of continuity, the actual government of the day allowed the paralyzed Salazar to preside over a mock government. In the novel Salazar is watched and protected by his housekeeper, Dona Maria, who interprets his eye blinks when questions are posed to him by his sham ministers.

The book is narrated by a poet, Carlos. It seems at one time Carlos was a poet of talent and promise. Over the years he was compromised, and he is now a figure of fun. He stages mock radio broadcasts and serves as the announcer for shows that have an audience of one: Salazar.

The narrator is the major problem of the novel. Carlos is extremely unsympathetic. When the narrator of the novel is a poet, the risks of boredom and pretense are high. Slavitt has concerned himself with the figure of the poet before and has, in a witty and likable novel, *Anagrams*, allowed himself far more scope to explore the role of a poet (or, better, the lack of a role for poetry in American society). However, his use of the poet in *Salazar Blinks* is less successful. (Or did I miss something? Is the whole novel a send-up of poets who think they do actually have some role, some place, in democratic or totalitarian societies?)

Novels based on "real" events also bring out the factchecker and the historical-comparer in me, and I note in what is a book narrated by a poet there is no mention of the one internationally known Portuguese poet of this century, Fernando Pessoa. Further, it is interesting to compare Slavitt's version of the 1930's in Portugal:

> There was a literacy rate of thirty-five percent—if you believe the government figures. Cut that in half for a more realistic estimate. No terrific base for all those fine democratic institutions. I mean what he [Salazar] was running was essentially a joke country.

with that of Albert Jay Nock, who actually was in Portugal in the 1930's:

> I am greatly impressed by the number and quality of the bookshops in Lisbon. They are an interesting and an encouraging sight. The whole population of Portugal is less than New York City's and I hear that 70 percent of it is

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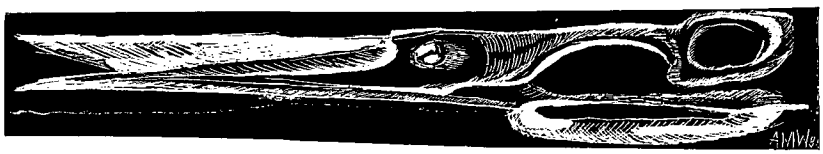
illiterate, which, if so, makes the reading public very small. It is astonishing to estimate, roughly, the number of bookstores that New York, or any city, would have if they stood in the same proportion to the number of people who are able to read. The literate Portuguese, moreover, seems able to manage French and Spanish as well as his own tongue, for the shops carry a large stock in both languages. . . .One sees a considerable blessing in illiteracy when one remarks the utter absence of signboards along the roadside. They hardly exist in Portugal; one may drive a hundred miles without seeing one. I do not think it would be unfair to say that the only advantage of our general literacy is that it enables people to read advertisements.

Despite my reservations, *Salàzar Blinks* is still better than 95 percent of the novels published this year in the United States. I also recommend Slavitt's *Anagrams, Rochelle or Virtue Rewarded, ABCD,* or his masterful translation of Ovid's *Tristia.*

Thomas McGonigle is the author of The Corpse Dream of N. Petkov *and the forthcoming* Going to Patchogue.

REVISIONS



TAKING LIBERTIES

Anyone who has ever seen a movie set in the time of the French Revolution knows that it was a conflict between "aristos" and "citizens." "Citizen" did become a propaganda term in France, and ever since the revolution there have been two approaches to the question of citizenship: classical republicanism, with its emphasis on duties as well as rights, on civic virtue as much as civil liberties; and radical democratism, which builds up the power of the government as guarantor of equality. Kenneth L. Karst's *Belonging to America: Equal Citizenship and the Constitution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 329 pp.) is a fairly representative example of the latter tradition.

For Karst, a UCLA law professor, the Dark Ages of American history end in the mid-1960's with *Brown* v. *Board of Education* and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Real citizenship means, it turns out, using the Supreme Court to defend the rights of blacks, women, aliens, and homosexuals against the entrenched hostility of local communities and private institutions. That there is even a conflict of interests — as opposed to a world-historical struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness — never dawns on Prof. Karst. He is immune even to the irony of celebrating Jeffersonian democracy, while at the same time attacking all of its institutions.

But neither irony nor scholarship is Karst's strong suit. The early settlement of America is the history of Calvinists looking for freedom from persecution; "After Turner's revolt, no Southern black could avoid the fear that the patrol might 'shoot first and answer [sic] questions later'"; homosexuality is only a question of orientation rather than of pathology; gender differences are ideological, not biological (for which no scientific evidence is cited, only feminist tracts); etc., etc. The most interesting blunder deserves to be cited in full:

> The [Korematsu] decision upheld Franklin Roosevelt's wartime order excluding about 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry (some 70,000 of them American citizens) from their West coast homes, for relocation in camps in the interior . . . but there was no threat of invasion, and there had been no acts of sabotage or espionage by Japanese Americans.

Taking the errors in order: a large proportion of Japanese Americans held dual citizenship, and when draft-age men were given the chance to fight for the US, only about 6 out of 100 in the relocation centers came forward. Of those who did volunteer, many refused to take the loyalty oath renouncing allegiance to the emperor. After Pearl Harbor, the threat of invasion was felt to be very real, although the actual attacks that materialized were quite trifling. Confiscated Japanese papers revealed that Imperial Japan had very eagerly recruited Japanese Americans to provide intelligence. On at least one occasion, Japanese Americans in Hawaii collaborated with the enemy, and even within the camps the fascist/militarist Hokoku Seinen Dan staged rallies in which the young men declared their eagerness to fight for the emperor. If there was little active sabotage, this may have had as much to do with the effective measures taken by the government as with the reliability of the Japanese-American population. To this day, there are loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry (Senator Hayakawa and Ken Masugi) who despise the claims for reparations.

But Karst knows many things without having to look them up. He knows that American (and Western) history is a record of intolerance against minorities and that the future belongs to creatures impatient of all distinctions of class, ethnicity, religion, "sexual orientation," and nationality. What will these free and equal citizens of the US and the world do with their freedom and equality? Karst apparently doesn't have a clue. After he and his kind get through destroying all the institutions of civil life, they leave the citizenry free to work for multinational corporations, engage in whatever erotic activities they happen to prefer, and attend Arts Councils demonstrations in the time they have left over. They are free to do anything they like — with the Supreme Court's permission, of course — so long as they do not interfere in the smooth operation of the government machine.

For a radically different view of citizenship, read *George Washington: A Collection,* compiled and edited by W.B. Allen for Liberty Press. It is a superb collection of letters and speeches that communicate the character of our greatest classical republican. (TF)

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Letter From Washington

by Samuel Francis

Our Nation, Your Money

◆

Ever since 1914, when the unity of European socialism was virtually shattered by the decision of some share-the-wealthers to support their own nations over the claims of the international class struggle, a furtive little thought has been gnawing at the progressivist mind like a mouse chewing on a rafter. That thought is the suspicion that nationalism and socialism, so far from being natural enemies, are in fact symbiotic creatures. Despite the pretense of the bourgeois chieftains of the left that the workers of the world despise their own countries, governments, and cultures, people who actually work for a living seem to have an embarrassing affection for political leaders and movements that assert national, racial, and cultural solidarity, while at the same time renouncing liberal capitalism as a machine of national exploitation and destruction.

The obvious example, of course, is Adolf Hitler, who succeeded in making the phrase "national socialism" a synonym for tyranny and genocide, but Joseph Stalin is no less in the same camp. From the 1920's Stalin began to mutter anti-German, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, and ultranationalist sentiments that eventually served him well in the 1940's, when he had to deal with a real foreign threat. Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, the Sandinistas, Tito, Nkrumah, Sukarno, and similar gentlemen all beat the same drum of consolidating their own races or nations around hatred for private, often foreign, financial, commercial, agricultural, and industrial wealth. Richard Nixon remarks in his memoirs how on a trip to Italy in 1947 he noted that "the leaders of postwar European communism understood the power of nationalism and were appropriating that power."

Totalitarian national socialism, however, is generally dismissed as an aberration. The truth, as every damp-eyed parlor pink still insists, is that real socialism rejects the parochial bonds and institutions of nation, race, and culture, that it looks forward to a planet unified by equal distribution of wealth and universal liberation from the confining chains of irrational group loyalties and identities. Still, the working and lower-middle parts of the social spectrum, which are supposed to provide the troopers on the long march to the new Eden, persist in giving their votes to politicians who, even in the political mainstream, entertain a different vision.

Neither the British Labour Party nor the post-New Deal Democrats in the United States could have exercised the kind of mass following and political power they have enjoyed had they not swigged on the potent brew that nationalism and socialism compose. While in their inner councils the leaders of the two parties often glowed over the prospects of "one world" and crafted their foreign policies toward that end, they had enough sense not to carry their true beliefs to the polls. Harry Truman's penchant for combining chauvinistic strutting with solicitude for the common man makes him about as reasonable a facsimile of Benito Mussolini as the United States has yet sported. Nor may it be entirely accidental that John F. Kennedy's best known public utterance—"Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country"—is largely a paraphrase of a concluding sentence of *The Dynamics of War and Revolution*, written in 1940 by Lawrence Dennis, then the leading exponent of an American fascism. "A nation is a nation," wrote Dennis, "by reason of what its citizens have done for it rather than because of what it has done for them."

As long as the democratic left persuaded American workers that it combined nationalistic pride with concern for their economic interests by reaching into other people's pockets, it prospered. Ever since its leadership passed into the hands of George McGovern and his crew, who have tried to delete the nationalism, its electoral fortunes have sunk. The nationalist rhetoric of Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and Mrs. Thatcher began to attract the rank and file supporters of the left to conservative causes. Only in the last few years have some of the more percipient leftists begun to realize their error and tried to rectify it by talking once more about family, community, and nation.

Yet if conservatives have flourished in the last 20 years because their opponents have abandoned or compromised nationalist themes, the right has discovered only part of the secret formula that yielded a mass following for the left. The right in America and Western Europe remains stridently procapitalist and voices its social and economic ideas in an individualist and universalist rhetoric derived from classical liberalism. Its solidarist invocations of nation, family, community, and cultural tradition are fundamentally at odds with its attachments to an abstract individuality and a cosmopolitan "market" that refuses to discriminate against the color of money.

The result is a political dialogue between two rather incoherent voices, what seems to be an irresolvable destabilization of each ideological camp, and the gradual erosion of their distinctive identities as competing alternatives for conducting government. The left sneers at national and cultural loyalties, but offers an economics naturally suited to the collective aspirations of its constituency in the underclass. The right bubbles about opportunity, growth, and private gratification, but also serves up affirmations of national and cultural bonds.

The confusion became clear in last year's presidential campaign. Missouri Democrat Richard Gephardt and Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis sounded the horn of "economic nationalism," but whatever success this theme might have enjoyed was drowned out by their refusal to break with the liberal universalist mainstream of their

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party and its tradition. American workingmen might fear losing their jobs to Japanese competitors, but they're even more afraid of Willie Hortons let loose by the humanitarianism of the left. On the right, Rep. Jack Kemp managed to neutralize whatever nationalist sentiments his anticommunist foreign policy might have roused by promising virtually to ignore the interests and concerns of white, middle-class Republicans in the primaries. "I don't want the Republican Party to be an all-white party, an all white-collar party, a business party or a middle-class party," he told Republican voters in Michigan in 1987, and he promised to compete with the Democrats "not just in the Sun Belt but in the ghettoes and the barrios." Suburban Republicans who had seen their old neighborhoods become ghettoes and barrios probably were less than excited by Mr. Kemp's vision of their party's future.

The contemporary American right's commitment to the universalism of "democratic capitalism," to unrestricted immigration, egalitarianism, "global democracy" and a "global economy," and the supremacy of private aspirations over public good, prevent it from taking advantage of the natural conjunction of collective aspirations that nationalism and socialism represent, as does the left's contempt for national identity, cultural traditionalism, and anything else that stands in the way of global progress toward the One Big Lump. Given the track record of national socialism in this century, perhaps this deadlock is to the good; but evidence is accumulating that it won't last.

Simply because intellectual and political elites have dismissed the symbiosis of nationalism and socialism as an aberration, except when they've figured out how to exploit it, is no reason to pretend it isn't there or that it won't be around in the future. Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party in South Africa and relatively successful similar movements led by Jean Marie Le Pen in France, Carl Hagen in Norway, and Bernhard Andres in West Germany suggest that the partnership is still going strong. In the United States, Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition is a thinly veiled effort to synthesize the economics of international socialism with the nonwhite and anti-Western racial solidarity of the Third World (whether located in Soweto or in Miami).

Mr. Jackson enters the stage from the left, but there are other actors who speak their lines from the opposite direction. This decade's countercultural analogies to the hippies of the 1960's are the skinheads, who are no less pathetic than the drug-soaked flower children, though more dangerous physically. And, lastly, there is the Hon. David Duke, former Klansman, who beat the brother of an ex-governor of Louisiana in a race for the state legislature in February, despite the concerted opposition of Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Lee Atwater, and the clergy and media of his district. Mr. Duke and the skinheads may not know much about economics, socialist or otherwise, but they seem to have tapped into a subterranean stream in the Western mind that in the 1990's could again emerge as a powerful political force. The 20th century is not over yet, and those who ignore the continuing presence of the rough beasts that created it may wind up staring them in the face for a while longer.

Samuel Francis is deputy editorial page editor of The Washington Times.

Letter From the Southwest

by Odie Faulk

Doctoring Honor

◆

Commencement has come and gone, and with it another crop of eager graduates. Yet given far more of the spotlight at any of these commencements than bachelors', masters', and doctoral candidates were those being awarded honorific degrees and certificates. The practice of universities bestowing honorary degrees originated as a way to give public recognition to those rare individuals who had made outstanding contributions to society. Someone who had written great books would have bestowed on him a Doctorate of Letters or a Doctorate of Literature; a distinguished statesman would be awarded a Doctorate of Laws; and the theologian

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of great distinction given a Doctorate of Divinity.

The theory behind this was laudable. Society should have some way of recognizing and honoring its great men and women. Unlike England, where outstanding individuals can receive the title "Sir" or "Dame" at the hands of the queen, Americans have been content with this less aristocratic form of recognition.

But human nature being what it is, the honorary doctorate was being widely abused by mid-20th century. To be elected governor of a state was to bring an honorary doctoral degree from those state institutions aspiring to bigger budgets, while any wealthy donor who gave a large sum to an institution obviously was qualified to be a doctor of something or other.

Where the great universities pioneered, the small teacher-training colleges followed, and the honorary doctorate was soon cheapened. Schools that were not accredited to award any graduate degrees were handing out honorary doctorates wholesale. So widespread is the abuse of honorary degrees that many states have passed laws forbidding the practice at state colleges and universities. Now these institutions give out "Distinguished Service Awards" or, if the recipient is a graduate of that institution, a "Distinguished Alumnus Certificate."

Anyone who gives a sizable sum to a university no doubt deserves some public recognition. Few would quarrel with Distinguished Service Awards or Distinguished Alumnus Certificates. Nor would most people quarrel with the honorary doctorate for those of genuine accomplishment. However, almost everyone would agree that the sale of what purport to be genuine diplomas is a fraud.

For years officials from the Post Office Department and various other governmental agencies have been trying to close mail order diploma mills. Those who peddle such degrees seem to congregate in California, Texas, and Florida, but they offer their wares through advertisements in national magazines —even occasionally in academic journals: "Enrollment now underway for undergraduate and graduate degrees. Credit given for non-collegiate experience. Earn a Ph.D. in just three months."

Those who answer such ads are informed that, for a fee ranging from a few hundred to several thousand dollars, they can become an engineer, an accountant, a medical doctor, or a doctor of philosophy. Many such diplomas come instantly. The completed application and accompanying check gets grades assigned, a full transcript completed, and a diploma suitable for framing mailed.

There are a few higher-class mail order institutions that make applicants swear to have completed a required reading list of several books. Then the applicants fly to the "university" to stay in its facilities for a week-long "seminar" or two. Those who fail the first examination are guaranteed that they can pass the test if they enroll for "remedial tutoring," which requires another week or two at the institution's facilities. Then the degree is awarded.

Such institutions apparently do a good business, for ads continue to run where they can easily be seen. There always are sufficient egotists around who want to hang a framed diploma proclaiming themselves to be a Ph.D. and who are willing to pay for the privilege. Others buy such diplomas in order to get good jobs. I recall a few years ago when one such institution in Texas was shut down by the authorities amid wide publicity about the fraud involved. In a neighboring state several county school superintendents resigned in a hurry because their only academic credentials were from this tainted institution.

For those individuals in America who want a doctorate from an accredited institution, not one purchased by mail order, there are many private colleges and universities still awarding honorary doctorates at every commencement. In fact, it is the genteel awarding of such diplomas to wealthy donors that keeps many such schools solvent. The going price these days, I understand, is about $200,000 — although if one shops around the degree can be had for less at those church colleges with the proverbial wolf at the door.

In fact, it is these schools that practice one of the greatest frauds in the doctoral business. At every commencement at most small church colleges, the institution awards five or six Doctor of Divinity degrees to practicing ministers. These recipients, for the most part, do not make a personal donation to the school in order to receive the degree, nor do they have to demonstrate great piety or wisdom. Rather they usually are preachers whose churches make a steady donation to the school to help with its financial problems.

The president of one such school confided to me recently that but for donations from ministers aspiring to an honorary doctorate he would have had to close his institution. And, he added, he always made certain that any preacher getting an honorary doctorate had his church donate at least $10,000 a year for five years before awarding the degree. This president said such was his practice because he had noted that the minute most preachers received an honorary doctorate from his school, they ceased the annual contribution. "They no longer want to have anything to do with us, no connection," he told me, "for they are embarrassed at how they got the degree."

However, such preachers are not too embarrassed by the process to ignore their new stature. The minister will instruct his staff and his faithful congregation to address him as "Doctor." And he will change his title from "Reverend" to "Doctor" on the bulletin board outside the church and on its printed literature. I know one such preacher who immediately had new business cards printed.

If you think this an exaggeration, the next time you are introduced to a preacher using the title Doctor, ask him what kind of doctorate it is. The odds are he will say a Doctor of Divinity. And on the bulletin board outside the

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church or on his card, he will abbreviate his degree as D.D. The earned graduate degree in this field is Doctor of Theology. With a D.D. there were no years in graduate school, no lengthy thesis, no burning the midnight oil; just a healthy donation from his church budget to some struggling little denominational college.

Still, there are times when the honorary doctorate can be of use. Years ago I was teaching at a major university whose president had only one academic degree, a bachelor of shop education. He held his position by virtue of his rank of major general in the state national guard and the fact that this institution was heavily military in its undergraduate emphasis. Nearby was a name university run by a fundamental Protestant sect; its president likewise had no doctorate, holding his position by virtue of his orthodoxy. The faculty at each institution was embarrassed at not being able to address the president as doctor, so a swap was arranged between the two schools. Each president would address the other's commencement, and each would be awarded an honorary doctorate of letters. Sad to relate, the president of the school I was at, the major general, gave his address without benefit of a written text. It was one of the less literate efforts ever delivered at a commencement ceremony. But he returned to our hallowed halls crowned with his doctorate, and the faculty was more comfortable with him thereafter.

Another university president of my acquaintance—I'll call him Smith—handled the matter with much better taste and wit. Ten years ago the regents of this medium-sized state university asked Smith to move from his position as head of the state's Department of Public Safety to the presidency of the institution. As an attorney he had an earned juris doctorate degree, but the faculty did not feel that this was really an academic degree.

One professor, referring to the juris doctorate, said to him at the first reception held for him on campus, "I don't know if I can call you Doctor Smith."

"That's all right," the attorney responded with a smile. "Just call me President Smith."

Odie Faulk is an emeritus professor of history at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

In With the In-Crowd: Talkin' Trash, Spendin' Cash

◆

A joke going around down here asks why Southern women don't like group sex. The answer: too many thank-you notes. You know of course that I wouldn't besmirch the pages of a family magazine with such smut if it didn't speak directly to this month's topic. (No, not group sex. This isn't the *Penthouse Forum*, for crying out loud.) I want to talk about regional differences in manners: in particular, I want to look at the market value of Southern gentility, and say a few words about how criticism is understood in the South and elsewhere.

Southern expatriates have always traded on the region's stereotypically courtly style, but the exchange value of that currency probably peaked during the Gilded Age. So I conclude at least from William Stadiem's recently remaindered book, *A Class By Themselves*. That one of Stadiem's earlier books was *Marilyn Monroe Confidential* may suggest that he's not really the man to write the Southern *Our Crowd* that his subject calls for, but nevertheless I'm in his debt for introducing me to a fascinating little creep named Ward McAllister, the self-styled "Autocrat of Drawing Rooms."

McAllister, from Savannah, became the social arbiter of post-Civil War New York despite—in fact, partly *because* of—remaining conspicuously a Southern gentleman. McAllister didn't disguise his Southern origins; rather, he played them for all they were worth. In this, he was an early example of the sort of Southern expatriate for whom the advantages of being Southern outweigh the disadvantages.

McAllister's affection for his native region didn't extend to fighting for it. He prudently sat out the Civil War in Newport and Delmonico's, and his memoir, *Society as I Have Found It*, barely mentions the war. (Readers of the copy in my university's library have graced his lengthy account of a wartime costume party with rude comments in the margins.) But Stadiem says McAllister really did like the South—indeed, that he was "enraptured" by it—and suggests that this was because "McAllister was inordinately fond of himself and all that he represented."

Be that as it may, McAllister worked hard to establish a Southern presence in New York high society. He enjoyed the patronage of Mrs. Astor, whom he called his "Mystic Rose," and his famous list was "The 400" because that was the size of her ballroom. Southerners were on that list in good numbers, and New Yorkers' stereotypes helped put some of them there. A presumption of gentility attached itself—still does—to presentable Southerners, overcoming in some cases backgrounds that wouldn't have withstood close scrutiny. As observers from William Faulkner to Billy Carter have remarked, Yankees can be surprisingly gullible where Southerners are concerned.

Consider, for example, McAllister's friend Richard T. Wilson. A former traveling salesman from Loudon, Tennessee, Wilson made a shady wartime fortune selling purloined Confederate supplies in Europe. But he was a tall, handsome man with elegant manners, and McAllister presented him to New York society with such success that his daughters married a Goelet millionaire, a Vanderbilt, and "Mungo" Herbert, brother of the Earl of Pembroke, while his son married Carrie Astor, daughter of the Mystic Rose herself.

The "marrying Wilsons" are an extreme case, but the point is that some Southerners have done well by acting the way Northerners expect Southern gentry to act. Ordinary Southern manners have made many middle-class Southern girls and boys into putative ladies and gentlemen once they've left the South.

Sometimes Southern gentry are allowed to be *impolite*, too; a certain hauteur is almost expected. Another story, this one about the English branch of the Astors: Lady Astor (the former Nancy Langhorne of Charlottesville) disapproved of the fast set around King Edward VII. It's said she once declined to play cards with him, saying she couldn't tell the difference

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between a king and a knave. Her friend A.L. Rowse explains that since she began her life as a Virginia belle she never felt inferior to anybody.

Certainly Nancy Astor was proud of her origins. Rowse writes that she was "an unreconstructed Southerner, a Virginian first and last." When she entertained Virginia soldiers at Cliveden during World War II, she always told them, "When you get drunk and disorderly, tell people that you are from New York." She died at age 85, in 1964, and was buried with a Confederate flag in her hands.

Like Richard Wilson, Nancy Astor got away with a lot, in part because she was a Southerner and acted the way people expect Southerners to act. If you're not Lady Astor or one of The 400, though, acting out somebody else's idea of what Southerners are all about can be a risky business. You risk your dignity and self-respect, in the first place; there can be an element of Samboism in all this. In the second place, you risk becoming something of a house Southerner, subject to dismissal when folks don't find the act amusing anymore.

Ward McAllister found that out the hard way. His memoir, published in 1890, turned out to be his undoing. His chronicle of dinners, cotillions, and fancy-dress balls was seen in some quarters as a betrayal, a portrait of rich Yankees as insecure tradesmen in need of Southern (specifically, McAllister's) guidance. Mrs. Astor abandoned him, and Stuyvesant Fish announced that "McAllister is a discharged servant. That is all."

The Astors and Fishes were wrong about McAllister. He was a silly, vain, self-absorbed little man—sort of a Truman Capote, a proto-Capote, without the talent. But his book wasn't malicious: he wasn't smart enough for that. He didn't mean to offend his rich and powerful friends; he just miscalculated. Capote may have done the same with *Answered Prayers*.

It's hard to say, though. Some Southern expatriates—and Capote may have been one—have quite consciously set out to trash the Northern society they saw around them. It is usually pretty tiresome, to be sure, when Southerners go on about how awful the North is. The impulse has produced some fine country music, though, and when someone with real gifts of observation and expression succumbs to it, the results can be wonderfully pungent social criticism. And a surprisingly large number of talented Southerners have had that response to living in the North.

Consider the Vanderbilt Agrarians, for example, the authors of *I'll Take My Stand*, a slashing attack on industrial—that is, Yankee—society, published in 1930. I believe that all 12 of them had lived outside the South before they came to write that book, and a number of them still did as the book was being written. For these men, living outside the South had inflamed their Southernness. Their Southern-bred distaste for Northern ways gave them their theme, and their considerable literary talent means the book is still worth reading.

Funny thing: within a few years, several of the Agrarians had teaching jobs in the North—pretty good ones, too. Can't Yankees *read*?

Consider the similar, more recent, case of Tom Wolfe (the New Journalist, not the Tar Heel novelist). Here is a studiedly Southern boy, a graduate of Washington and Lee, wearing the custom-tailored white suits of a real Dixie dandy. This pose, of course, disguises a brilliant writer and an acute social critic, with both the literary style and the criticism rooted in traditions that Southerners, at least, ought to recognize as Southern. The writing is strikingly innovative—but in an ornamented, particularistic way that reminds me of James Agee, that premature New Journalist from Knoxville. The criticism is profoundly conservative.

Look at what Wolfe does: he savages *nouveaux riches* social climbers, shallow left-wing trendinistas, fast-track yuppies, Third World rip-off artists, and other denizens of modern New York and California. Who is presented as admirable? Well, a North Carolina stock-car racer and a West Virginia test pilot, for starters—the "last American hero" and exemplar of "the right stuff," respectively.

And Wolfe *still* gets invited to the right parties. What's going on here?

George Garrett has written about this in his contribution to a collection of essays called *Why the South Will Survive* (whose list of contributors largely recapitulates the masthead of *Chronicles*, by the way). The answer, Garrett suggests, lies in those regional differences in manners I mentioned earlier. Southern critics of the North like Wolfe and the Agrarians and, in their own ways, Truman Capote and James Dickey, have exploited those differences. The element of real hostility in their criticism goes largely unrecognized outside the South, because criticism is understood differently there.

Southerners generally regard outsiders' criticism as offensive, never mind whether it's fair or not. Unless guests *mean* to be offensive, they don't criticize their hosts. It's bad manners, and Garrett observes that for Southerners "A violation of the code of manners [can mean] the same thing as a fist in the face or a blade between the ribs." So when Southerners outside the South criticize what they see around them, they are, by their own lights, being very rude indeed—and on purpose. As somebody once observed, Southerners will be polite until they are angry enough to kill you. Thus, as Garrett puts it, by Southern standards, "Wolfe's satirical assault on both the intellectual hypocrisy and the bad manners of the New York scene . . . is just about as violent an attack as he could make, short of tossing around a case of fragmentation grenades."

But Northerners simply don't seem to understand that their Southern critics are shooting to kill. They admire Wolfe's style, Capote's wit, the Agrarians' vision—and don't recognize that these men don't like them very much. Garrett implies that if the "Northern establishment" ever figures that out, these men will wind up like poor, silly Ward McAllister—discharged servants. (Garrett's own novel, *Poison Pen*, makes the point much harder to miss—but he published it only after moving back to the South from Michigan and, whether by design or not, it is damned hard to get hold of a copy. Don't wait for the paperback.)

I'm not sure Garrett is entirely right, though. The "Northern establishment" he's talking about is basically the New York literary crowd, and I don't think he entirely understands *their* code of manners. Unlike ours, it rewards criticism, even grotesquely unfair criticism, provided it's suffic-

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iently clever or amusing. That's why New Yorkers fight all the time: they enjoy it, and they're not really *in earnest* about it.

Some survey data are to the point. When asked some time back what the best American state was, over 90 percent of native North Carolinians picked North Carolina, and other Southerners were almost as enthusiastic about their states. Less than half of the residents of New York and Massachusetts said they were living in the best state. Think about that. North Carolina really is the best American state, of course, and other Southern states are almost as good. I wouldn't want to deny that. But they're not *that* much better than New York and New England.

The explanation of these findings surely lies at least partly in regional differences in manners. Southerners expect each other to show state loyalty and pride. Yankees expect each other to complain—and they don't seem to mind if Southerners complain, too, so long as they do it eloquently or amusingly. In other words, as long as Southern expatriates criticize Northern society *well*, they can be surprisingly successful. Right many talented Southerners have been moved by living in the North to do exactly that, and the literature of American social criticism is richer for it.

John Shelton Reed is a professor of sociology and adjunct professor of American studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. This letter is adapted from material in one of the 1988 Draughon Lectures he gave at Auburn University.

Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

When Pigs Fly

◆

Elsewhere, life is predictable: the State Legislature wants a raise, Khomeini wants someone dead, Tiny Tim is running for mayor of New York, and Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith are pregnant, ecstatic about it, and planning to move up the date of their second marriage to each other.

Inside the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes, though, the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union is sticking up for freedom of the press—and of religion.

The MCLU is seeking repeal of the 6 percent state sales tax on over-the-counter books (the tax has been in place since 1967), over-the-counter magazines (the tax has been in place since 1983), and printing. The group claims that the taxes violate First Amendment guarantees of freedom of the press (and also, incidentally, the Minnesota Constitution) and threaten religious liberty because they raise the price of the Bible and of religious books and magazines, and might *potentially* raise them so high that people wouldn't be able to afford them anymore.

According to a *Minneapolis Star Tribune* article, MCLU Associate Director Matthew Stark announced their plans during a Christmas Day news conference.

The approach the group is taking is, well, *novel*. Stark went into a Golden Valley bookstore in early December and bought a King James Version Bible (sales tax 18 cents); a copy of *Business Week* (sales tax 12 cents); and a *Webster's New World Dictionary* (sales tax 24 cents). He then wrote to the state revenue commissioner and asked him for a refund of the 54 cents in sales tax.

A separate letter to the commissioner sought a refund of $47.99 in sales tax that the MCLU paid to have its newsletter printed.

The MCLU figures that if it doesn't get the $48.53 back, it will sue. If it *does* get the money back, it will assume that the revenue commissioner agrees that the taxes are unconstitutional. Either way, the Minnesota Civil Liberties Union will have a chance to be heard, and freedoms of all kinds will have their day.

The MCLU doesn't talk on the phone or, apparently, answer all the mail it gets, but I did manage to find an attorney who does some work for them. He informed me in late February that nothing had happened yet: Stark's two letters were still sitting in the state revenue commissioner's office, and the MCLU was waiting for a response from that office before pursuing the matter further. The attorney *did* say that he expects the matter to go as far as the appellate court, possibly even further. Because of state and federal data privacy laws, the Minnesota Department of Revenue wasn't able to confirm the status of Stark's letter to the revenue commissioner.

As much as I'd like to believe that the MCLU has the best interests of all Minnesotans at heart, there are some aspects of this case and of ACLU behavior in general that keep me skeptical. For one thing, the American Civil Liberties Union has, over the years, acquired the reputation of gleefully causing Nativity sets to be banned from the courthouse lawns of this Christian nation. It's hard for me to understand how this project of the MCLU—ostensibly to promote religious freedom by eliminating the tax on Bibles—fits in with that behavior. Somehow that Christmas Day news conference haunts me.

In addition, it's patently clear that a 6 percent sales tax on Bibles, which is no higher than the tax on other books, poses no infringement on freedom of the press or freedom of religion. According to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Matthew Stark explained that a sales tax means that the government is intervening in the relationship between the publisher and the buyer, which is true—but it's also true of all forms of taxation. Is this project just a minnow which the MCLU plans ultimately to use on a much bigger fish?

Mostly, though, what would bother me if I were a Minnesotan—and even if I were a Minnesotan who wanted that particular tax, or even all taxes, abolished—is that the MCLU doesn't seem to be available for comment. A recording explains that they don't do business over the phone. I wrote to Associate Director Stark at the address the phone recording gave me, including my home phone number and a stamped, self-addressed envelope in case he preferred to write to me, and I haven't heard from him. The attorney I talked to—who *works* for the MCLU—couldn't exactly tell me who the *director* of the group was. I guess I could call the recording again, get the MCLU mailing address, and then write to Stark and ask *him* . . . but never mind.

Jane Greer pays a hefty state sales tax in North Dakota for printing Plains Poetry Journal.

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THE ACADEMY

Jeanne Berg

New Thoughts on the French Revolution

by Thomas Molnar

François Mitterrand's socialist administration has become so scandal-ridden and financially precarious that the year-long celebration of the revolution's bicentennial is now nothing but a hypocritical farce. Yet Mitterrand's reference to 1789 is an ideological obligation, since the "leftist myth" is the number one legitimizing factor that makes the regime credible in the eyes of a fluctuating electorate. What happens on the level of pure politics—a long dithyramb to the "great ancestors"—is only one side of the coin. The pious organizers, for all the money they had to spend on the celebration, are quite clearly out of touch with the many scholars and historians who right now are giving the lie to the official version. This intellectual rebellion of the mind can be explained by two things: one is the unquestioned decline of Marxism among the intellectual class (this dates back exactly to Solzhenitsyn's visit and debates in Paris in 1975); the other is the rise of a new generation of historians and other researchers who are no longer impressed by what historian François Furet calls "the Leninist/Jacobin interpretation" of the French Revolution.

Furet, himself an ex-Marxist, has been in the forefront of the elaboration of the new version, and his just-published *Dictionary of the French Revolution* (with twenty-some contributors) has become overnight a best-seller, although the volume is rigorously scholarly, heavy—and expensive. Furet is the first to acknowledge a debt to his predecessors, distant and near, as he did in a book that turned the tide some ten years ago, *Let Us Rethink the Revolution*. Around the First World War, Augustin Cochin, returning to contemporary documents that leftist Sorbonne historians Mathiez, Aulard, and Soboul had placed under a quasi-interdict, unmasked the real initiators of the revolution, the Jacobin/radical *sociétés de pensée* (ancestors of today's Trotskyist and ultraleft circles); they consisted of Parisian and provincial debating clubs where lawyers, Freemasons, admirers of Rousseau, and a variety of illuminati (even some clergy) used to meet, spread the message, and lend mutual encouragement. Furet does not hesitate now to add to Cochin's work important documents of counterrevolutionary literature from Joseph de Maistre to Charles Maurras, and above all the writings of Tocqueville, whose critical moderation has influenced Furet's own students and collaborators.

Public opinion has in a certain way supported this transvaluation of the events surrounding 1789. French television recently organized two events, one devoted to a "retrial" of Louis XVI, the other to a "retrial" of the queen, Marie Antoinette. In a poll taken after the shows aired, 70 to 80 percent of the spectators acquitted the royal couple. By the way, the spectators' ancestors would have presumably done the same, which is why Robespierre, St.-Just, and prosecutor Fouquier-Tinville had decided to do their bloody work quickly, without consulting the nation.

It is now rather simple to analyze the origin and course of the revolution. Hippolyte Taine in the last century did it with a masterful subtlety; today Furet presents the modern diagnosis in a lapidary sentence: the Bolshevik Revolution has intervened to camouflage and distort the French events. It became the interest of many people to "save" 1917, its prestige, worldwide validity, and influence, and to secure for it a respectable historical ancestry. While Robespierre has no statue anywhere in France (a Communist municipality is now planning to erect one), because his figure still strikes horror in the hearts of many people, Lenin has streets named after him. After all, wasn't he a famous statesman and wasn't his regime a wartime ally?

This business of a respectable ancestry plays a role not only for Marxist intellectuals, but also for two political parties, the Socialist and the Communist, which hanker after a unity of doctrine and unity of action. The significance of the present historical "revisionism" is that it does not come from the right—although the revisionists are accused of just that, for example by historian and Communist party member Michel Vovelle. It comes from too many unimpeachable academic sources to be called politically motivated. Important historians like E. Le Roy Ladurie and Pierre Chaunu do not subscribe to the simple view that pre-1789 misery and injustice had prepared the way for the downfall of the old structure. Among the hundreds of books on 1789 and its sequels and actors published in the last two or three years, the best ones scrutinize the following causes and phenomena: the writings of Rousseau, the Abbé Sieyès, and also of Immanuel Kant—yes, the Herr Professor from Koenigsberg!—who justified the massacres of the Ter-

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ror and the birth of human rights in brutal violence; the legitimation of democracy, a delicate topic since in it are linked the doctrine of popular sovereignty and the "theology of history" (Kant); and the bases of Robespierre's but also Napoleon's dictatorships, which, according to young historians undeterred by reigning taboos, were far more totalist than the rule of Louis at any time.

It is understandable that such topics go deeper than the usual textbook praise heaped upon the "virtuous" heroes like the corrupt demagogue Danton, the hateful accuser Marat, and the killer Hébert. No wonder that in a new book critical of the bicentennial celebrations Pierre Chaunu calls this "an apology for crime." It is not a matter of dismissing the entire revolution, but of finding a suitable and balanced place for it in the unraveling of history. François Furet admits that the ideas of freedom and participation were in 1789 new and persuasive, but he insists that the sequels must be condemned as dangerous precisely for freedom and participation. Already Italian historian Guglielmo Ferrero speaks of "two revolutions," one that was to reform the kingdom along constitutional lines, the other that unleashed violence in the very halls of the National Assembly.

I cannot say that the more than 300 books published so far about 1789 contain sensational revelations. The novelty is not in the new light shed on the well-known events; it is the gradual reevaluation of known documents after the rereading that, it seems, every generation or so must undertake. In this respect two works stand out: lawyer Jean-Denis Bredin's *Sieyès*, and André Tosel's *Kant révolutionnaire*.

The revolutionary Abbé's reputation needs no special introduction; this priest without a vocation wrote the pamphlet "What is the Third Estate?" and then, after a period of hiding during Robespierre's Terror, went on to be one of the triumvirs of Napoleon's consulate. His pamphlet may be seen in a different light today, when the state is treated as nothing but a legal structure based on a bare "social contract." What for Sieyès's contemporaries was a brilliant new formulation, has become for us a cause of fragility in democracies that are no longer supported by divine reference, tradition, and the common good. In place of these ancient props, the Abbé set up a fictitious social contract, then delegated to the contractors' representatives unlimited powers of decision-making. "They possess the leisure, the intelligence, and the education to debate matters, they know better things than the busy working men whom they represent." So much for popular government.

André Tosel's selections from Kant's revolutionary texts — some of them half-hidden during the philosopher's life, others posthumous — present an even more terrifying picture, since Kant is the philosopher who has had the greatest influence on the past two centuries. Kant believed that the goal of mankind is to overcome nature, establish the strict rule of law, and thus put an end to both history and philosophy (the Hegelian/Marxist view, *avant la lettre*). The Reign of Terror (1792-94) was therefore justified; uprisings against it, for example by Catholic Vendée, were not. The republic, wrote Kant, is the highest form mankind can achieve (Marx said the classless society, Churchill said democracy), and it must be guided by "morally upright public philosophers," obviously like himself, who counter through public opinion the influence of "conservatives" and other agents of despotism.

Jacques Julliard, in an interview published by the review *Catholica*, argues against Sieyès and the revolutionary thesis, that the representatives must indeed "keep their fingers on the pulse of civil society," but that going beyond this would be a "deviation." Political parties that easily degenerate into quasi-secret groups are in this sense negators of the social contract itself. Let us have either a total democracy without representation (Rousseau's ideal), or recognized structures that articulate power (a reactionary position?)

Thus Sieyès's propositions — and he is recognized in France today as the central figure of 1789 — are now seen as leading to unfreedom rather than the foundation stone of a constitution. In fact, in *La République du Centre*, where authors F. Furet, J. Julliard, and Pierre Rosanvallon write the revolution's epitaph, an arbitrating position emerges as if a long crisis is to be solved: "Let's not play on words: the bicentennial seems to us the shroud of the revolutionary tradition." It does not appear so to everybody. Régis Debray, once Ché Guevara's comrade (and, like the guerrilla leader, arrested in Bolivia), now an advisor to Mitterrand, writes with nostalgia that the new thinking on the revolution destroys the historical interpretation on which the French republic's foundation myth rests. For Debray, as for Vovelle, the republic is not a political regime like any other, it is "a struggle and an ideal."

Let us bear in mind that in the ever-overheated ideological climate of France a demythicized revolution may lead to a fatal loss of prestige for the republic — whose official symbol is a woman wearing the revolutionary Phrygian red bonnet; and the weakening of the republican myth may lead in

LIBERAL ARTS

MUSIC AND THE SAVAGE BEASTS

In Barrow, Greenpeace wasted no time fetching Jim Nollman of Interspecies Communication, who, like Dr. Doolittle, talks to the animals — turkeys, wolves, monkeys, deer, orcas, whatever. With the orcas, he told me, "it's a musical interface." He tries to invite other musicians. "We have Tibetan lamas come up and do Buddhist ceremonies into the water." Through an underwater stereo system, Nollman serenaded the trapped gray whales with his electric guitar. (Brower told me it sounded to him like hard rock and that the whales, "who didn't have any choice but to listen," hated it.) Next, he put on a tape of Zulu songs by the native South African group Ladysmith Black Mambazo. That's when Bone died and sank.

—from "Circus Whales" by Ted Williams, in the March 1989 issue of Audobon

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turn to new thoughts on a royalist restoration. Whether such a thing would be an improvement or not, it is hard to say. In Spain, a nondescript king at least prevents chaos. The world witnessed the burial of Hirohito, the emperor surrounded with veneration and sacred symbols. The Brazilian congress just decided that four years hence a popular referendum would choose a new regime: republican, presidential, or imperial. The Prince and Princess of Wales are immensely popular in France. And the old Count of Paris, pretender to the throne of Louis XVI, has chosen his grandson, Prince Jean, as his successor. Real history is unpredictable; it plays havoc with the severe mold in which revolutions want to enshrine it.

Significant in all this is the change of public climate from the old, generally (except for royalists) positive judgment on the revolution, to the new evaluation, which goes from indifference to rejection. Intellectuals, professors, and writers live in France in a greater closeness with large segments of the population than in any other country except perhaps Russia. Thus there is some cause-and-effect relationship between the men and the books here mentioned and the overall climate. It is impossible precisely to scrutinize the chemistry of such changes in mentality, sentiment, and semipublic discourse. Three reasons may, however, be tentatively suggested.

The first is the memory of the minirevolution to which the French refer as "May 1968," and which was perhaps the last gasp of irresponsible intellectuals, symbolized by Sartre and his colleagues. There are enough repulsive reminiscences of those events to have depoliticized large segments of the population for a long time. The lesson is clear: if revolutions are not stopped in time—as Louis XVI could have done and de Gaulle half-did in 1968—they will go on chopping off heads.

The second reason is the genuine repugnance people feel before the game of democratic parties and pressure groups, now presented—this is still new for the French—on television. Corruption, pious promises, and incompetence have spared no member of the political class. People have begun refusing to vote, the "myth" is in shreds, the "system" is despised. The vote for Le Pen could easily climb to 20 percent, not because people favor him, but as a manifestation of protest.

The last reason is simply the erosion of ideals that overcomes modern liberal-welfare industrial democracies. When only material fulfillment and obsession with rights are spoken about by institutions and the media, the citizen not only turns selfish, he wallows in the self-centered "lifestyle" and is no longer embarrassed to display his preference. France, too, has arrived at this stage. On a popular level it may not be a "rethinking of the revolution," only a rejection of the transparent lies uttered and pictured 24 hours a day.

Seventeen eighty-nine seems, in comparison, like a year of enthusiasm and civic fervor. Nineteen eighty-nine is, despite the fanfare and the confetti, a bored gesticulation.

Thomas Molnar is the author of Twin Powers: Politics and the Sacred.

LAW

Jeanne Berg

Dr. Koop on Life, Liberty, and a 'Smoke-Free' America

by Tibor R. Machan

Recently the Tobacco Institute, a lobbying outfit pleading the case for the tobacco industry, has been placing ads in numerous publications complaining about the harshness with which the government is fighting cigarette smoking. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop has been a vigilant soldier in the government's fight. But it is very probable that he has gone way beyond the call of duty in what he is willing to say and do about many Americans' choice to smoke cigarettes.

Dr. Koop is a good case in point as to why, despite the very attractive rhetoric of President Ronald Reagan, that kind of conservative administration is far from a true friend of individual freedom. President Reagan's employment of Dr. Koop is clear evidence that the actual policies endorsed by the Reagan administration toward people who choose to live their lives differently from Dr. Koop are quite dangerous to the very ideals Ronald Reagan claims to have been championing.

Consider that Dr. Koop is the person who said he "wants a smoke-free America by 1990." This sounds like an out-and-out threat to the liberty of a great many people who might not choose to quit smoking in the next year and a half. It is clearly an utterance with dictatorial overtones.

But perhaps Dr. Koop allowed himself some hyperbole. He may simply have meant that this is what he wishes would happen by 1990—that people would have quit smoking cigarettes.

No such luck. Dr. Koop does not only sound like a dictator, he seems to be thinking like one as well. Some time ago Dr. Koop commented on the Tobacco Institute's ads that lament all the harshness against smokers. He took the opportunity to respond to the industry's claim that the plan to ban cigarette ads is an unconstitutional attempt at censorship. He said that on the contrary, it was indeed the tobacco industry that engaged in censorship. As evidence he noted that many papers that carry cigarette advertisements refuse to run reports on the hazards of smoking.

Note Dr. Koop's claim. The tobacco industry's refusal to run ads in papers that carry reports it does not like now counts as censorship. This is akin to what I have heard defenders of the Soviet Union's government press say about the Western press. They claim that since in the West publishers can influence the editorial content of their papers, they are just as much involved in censorship as is the Soviet government.

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That, as well as Dr. Koop's response, is sheer, unadulterated sophistry. Censorship means the banning of a publication or display of human creations for others to freely choose to accept or reject.

If and when members of the tobacco industry withhold ads from papers that treat them unkindly—and the Tobacco Institute denies that this is a widespread practice, or that it even has any impact—they are simply refusing to trade in ways they believe will not be to their advantage. That is no different from my choosing not to eat at a certain restaurant or refusing to purchase a particular coat—perhaps for odd reasons (e.g., I am a vegetarian, I object to the use of animal furs). Such a boycott is the highest example of exercising our right to freedom of choice, and in a free society no one with an ounce of understanding of the nature of individual freedom would dare suggest that it constitutes censorship. Are we to regard Cesar Chavez a censor just because he proposes to boycott grapes? What about those Jews who, after 1945, refused to buy German cars? Or, perhaps even more pertinently, what about people who refuse to purchase blasphemous literature or refuse to go to see *The Last Temptation of Christ*? Actually, some people did, indeed, claim that the refusal to run or to view that movie amounted to censorship. But that is just as much nonsense as Dr. Koop's remark.

In a free country there is freedom of the press and freedom of choice as to what press one reads or which press one hires for purposes of running one's commercials. The paper can reject the ads and the advertiser can refuse to place his ads in it—it is all a matter of free trade. Because all of us have this freedom in such a society, there is a greater likelihood of all the news and all the various commentary getting fully aired somewhere. No advertiser nor any of the publications offering room to run ads is owed cooperation from the others.

Ronald Reagan said his regrets included the deficit, but that the rest of his administration was not bad, "not at all bad." I beg to differ. With Dr. Koop he might as well have hired Ralph Nader or Jeremy Rifkin. None of these individuals has a clear enough understanding of the nature of individual liberty to deserve to be in a government sworn to protect it for all of us, smokers or nonsmokers.

Tibor R. Machan teaches philosophy at Auburn University in Alabama, and is a senior editor of Reason.

LIBERAL ARTS

CAPTAIN FICTION

Mark Twain has a sketch in which, after a concerted effort to adequately express his horror at the book he's reviewing, he finally throws up his hands. He can't do it justice, he says, only quoting from it can do it justice, and as I remember he quotes from the thing for several oppressive pages. I understand Twain's point exactly, and after taking a look at former broadcaster Gordon "Captain Fiction" Lish's new *Extravaganza*, I feel my own words will fall short. I simply must quote:

"Smith says to Dale, 'Dr. Dale, Dr. Dale, what happened to you, Dr. Dale, you used to be such a lovely nice person, Dr. Dale, whoever could have pointed to a more gorgeous lovely person, Dr. Dale, so forthcoming with people and such a regular fella with people, so totally humble and mild—oh, but now, Dr. Dale, now—my God, you got on you such a way about you, Dr. Dale, you got to be so high and mighty with your way about you, Dr. Dale—look at you, nowadays you are always acting like such a terrific big shot, Dr. Dale, always walking around with your nose so stuck up there in the clouds.'

Dale says to Smith, 'Who, moi?'"

Still with us? But for such a literary giant one petard is not enough:

"'Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith, but you couldn't not possibly not hear it, Mr. Smith!'

'Naught, Dr. Dale.'

'No moo?'

'Naught.'

'No ding?'

'Naught.'

'No ha ha ha ha ha ha ha?'

'Nope.'

'Nothing?'

'Naught but thee, Dr. Dale.'

'You mean to tell me you didn't hear goodness and mercy following us all of our days, Mr. Smith?'

'So this was supposed to be also including Thursdays, Dr. Dale?'"

The truly dispiriting thing about the avant garde is that it creaks; it has all been done years ago, like 40 years ago, and however badly done then, better done then than now. I saw a 65-year-old woman at Le Cirque once, a woman with crocus-yellow hair and scarlet nails and a big diamond ring, wearing a hat with a long feather and—this was the killer—a black backless dress. There was something almost admirable about her effrontery, but really, she wasn't fooling anybody. As Captain Fiction writes, "No moo, no ding, no ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!"

—*Jack Ramsay*

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